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AMERICA IN IMAGINATIVE GERMAN  
LITERATURE IN THE FIRST HALF  
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



AMERICA IN IMAGINATIVE GERMAN  
LITERATURE IN THE FIRST HALF  
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

PAUL C. WEBER, A.M., Ph.D.

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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
MY PARENTS





## PREFACE

The following study had its origin in an investigation of the presentation of America in the works of Sealsfield, which was suggested to the author by Professor Camillo von Klenze of the College of the City of New York ten years ago. This research was nearly completed when the writer learned that a similar subject had been treated from a different angle by a student of Professor Julius Goebel of the University of Illinois and was well on the way to publication. He decided, therefore, to extend his researches to German literature in general from 1800 to 1850 and to trace therein the views of German writers on the United States. The most important part of this comprehensive investigation, which is limited to imaginative literature, is presented in the following dissertation.

In the eventful years of the last decade this work has been a source of pleasure and comfort to the author. Inspired by the love of his native as well as of his adopted country, he has endeavored to show how the swift rise of the Western Republic from its foundation was reflected in contemporary German poems and novels, and thus to produce a work that would be interesting and useful alike to the student of history and of literature.

I welcome this opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor Camillo von Klenze for the keen interest which he took in this study and for his many helpful suggestions; to Miss Dorothy Dondore, associate professor of English, Elmira College, New York, who called my attention to important works in French and English literature bearing on the subject of my thesis; to Mr. Daniel B. Duncan, instructor in English in

University Extension at Columbia University, for a careful reading of the manuscript, and to Professor F. W. J. Heuser and Dr. George C. O. Haas for prompt and valuable assistance in proofreading. Furthermore, I am deeply obliged to Mr. Frederic W. Erb and Mr. Roger Howson of the Columbia University Library for their courtesy in procuring for me important material from the libraries of other American universities, and also to these libraries, which so generously responded to their request.

My chief indebtedness is to Professor Robert Herndon Fife. It is due to his great interest in my work and to his untiring efforts that my research material has taken its final form in regard to composition and style, and that the manuscript could go to press. Above all, his friendly counsel and expert guidance as well as the unfailing encouragement he gave me in my undertaking, will always be most thankfully remembered

New York City,  
March, 1926.

P. C. W.

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## INTRODUCTION

The work here presented is based upon a much more comprehensive investigation than the title indicates. In undertaking his researches the author sought to determine how the United States was presented to the German reader in general during the first half of the nineteenth century. For that purpose he included in his research material all German publications of whatever sort in regard to America from 1800 to 1850, such as books of travel, scientific works, contributions to periodicals and imaginative literature, whether of German or German-American origin.

However, these studies yielded such an abundance of material that it seemed desirable to limit the present work to the most interesting and important phase of the subject, the imaginative literature of the period investigated. For the selection of this topic the following reasons were decisive.

In the first place, this subject has not yet found adequate treatment. While we have several good essays dealing with America in imaginative literature during and after the time of the Revolutionary War, no such presentation exists for the great period of the young Republic's political, economic, and cultural development during the first half of the nineteenth century. The works of Goebel,<sup>1</sup> Castle,<sup>2</sup> and Minor,<sup>3</sup> on this topic either give only a cursory review of the subject or they treat merely the most important writers. In recent years,

<sup>1</sup> Jul. Goebel, "Amerika in der deutschen Dichtung," in *Forschungen zur deutschen Philologie*, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Castle, "Amerikamüde," *Jahrb. der Grillparzergesellschaft*, 1902.

<sup>3</sup> J. Minor, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1896, pp. 662 ff.

Constantin Breffka, an American scholar residing in Germany, has published there a literary treatise entitled *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*.<sup>4</sup> This essay in its twenty-six pages gives only a concise summary of the views of German writers on the American republic from its foundation to modern times.

Secondly, it is of special interest to know what the representatives of imaginative literature, the German poets and novelists thought and wrote about America during the period of political unrest and longing at home, when so many German eyes turned away from the deplorable conditions of the Fatherland to the land of promise on the other side of the Atlantic.

Thirdly, it is in the sphere of imaginative literature that the material for determining German views of America during this period is most accessible and complete for our purpose.

The following investigation deals, therefore, only with the presentation of America in imaginative German literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, and material from the wider field of research will be drawn upon only so far as it relates to our main subject. Later on the author hopes to be able to work out and to publish the other parts of his investigations.

An introductory chapter is intended to show how the United States appeared in German publications during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Such an introduction seems necessary in order to see how far America was known in Germany at the beginning of the period that directly concerns us and to determine as nearly as possible the sources of information about America from which the German writers of the following years drew their knowledge of the Western Republic. In this connection a brief reference has been made to the presentation of America in French and English literature in the seventeenth

<sup>4</sup> Köln (J. G. Schmitz), 1917.

and eighteenth century. This first chapter will, therefore, attempt a general survey of all the important German publications in regard to America from 1775 to 1800, including a side-glance at the typical French and English presentation of the New World up to that time.

In planning the course for the main part of our investigation, we shall follow the various literary currents in Germany between 1800 and 1850 in their chronological and logical order. Thus, we shall have to begin with a discussion of the attitude toward America as manifested by the Romanticists in their earlier and later periods. Only such descriptions of travel as are in themselves closely related to creative literature will be treated. The next two chapters will be devoted respectively to the conception of America in the exotic novel and in the works of the Austrian poets. Following thereon the study will trace in the third decade the changing views of America which accompanied the infusion of a more realistic spirit into Romantic literature, and later on, will deal with the literature of the emigrants, echoing, as it did, the great migration to the New World during the thirties. Finally, we shall seek to show how the republic of the West appeared to the militant eyes of Young Germany. In conclusion, the results derived from our investigation will be brought together in an effort to present a comprehensive view of America as reflected in imaginative German literature from 1800 to 1850.





## CHAPTER I

### THE AWAKENING OF INTEREST IN AMERICA IN GERMAN LITERATURE FROM 1775 TO 1800

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Germans had from time to time emigrated to America in larger or smaller numbers,<sup>1</sup> but on account of the great distance and the difficulty of travel, no genuine and wide-spread interest in the New World had been aroused either in the higher or in the lower classes of the people. It is not surprising, therefore, that German literature in that period makes little mention of the New World.

An entirely different picture presents itself to us in the last quarter of the century. During that time writers began to gather and to spread information about America. Many scholars were engaged in the study of the new continent. A considerable number of poets praised the intense love of liberty in the hearts of the American people. The causes for the awakening of this interest can be traced partly to intellectual currents and partly to the political events of this period.

The second half of the eighteenth century can be characterized as an age of marked increase of curiosity. Frequent reports of transatlantic journeys of discovery led to a progressive widening of the mental horizon. Books of travel were in eager demand. The worth and importance of nations outside of Europe, which up to that time had never been mentioned in historical works, came to be generally admitted. An ideal of *Humanität*, broad enough to include even those people that rank lowest in human

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. R. Diffenderffer, *The German Immigration into Pennsylvania, 1700 to 1775*. Part II: The Redemptioners.

society, as the savages, found many adherents.<sup>2</sup> The result was that America, too, scarcely regarded before, came more and more within the range of vision of the poets and philosophers of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Political events helped to confirm this new cosmopolitan spirit. The striking personality of Benjamin Franklin, who, in 1766, had visited Holland and Germany and had been received with great distinction by the men of learning in these countries, necessarily aroused interest in Franklin's country.<sup>4</sup> But above all, the Revolutionary War attracted general attention.<sup>5</sup> Poets and scholars alike watched the struggle with the keenest interest, expressing in their works either warm sympathy or fundamental opposition to the cause of the colonies. As Biedermann says, "With the war for independence the educated classes in Germany begin for the first time to turn toward America."<sup>6</sup>

Frederick the Great was the first German monarch who took a friendly attitude toward the American Republic. During the Revolutionary War he not only prevented the English from hiring auxiliaries in his own states, but also rendered difficult the soldier-traffic of the German princes. He expressed openly his admiration for the bravery of the Americans and the strategy of George Washington, approved Steuben's entrance into the American army, and hastened, after the Republic had been established, to form a friendly alliance and a commercial treaty with her.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Herder, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Schaumkell, *Geschichte der deutschen Kulturgeschichtsschreibung*, etc., pp. 3 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. M. Victory, *Benjamin Franklin and Germany*, Diss., p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, W.A., v. 29, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> K. Biedermann, *Die nordamerik. u. die franz. Revolution*, etc., p. 483.—A. L. Heeren, *Autobiogr. Mitteilungen*, p. 19.—H. Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, I, 77 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Victory (see note 4), p. 16.—Fr. Kapp, *Friedrich der Grosse und die*

Immanuel Kant always showed himself a staunch supporter of the American cause against the English government, whose policies appeared to him almost despotic. His remarks to the Englishman Joseph Green,<sup>8</sup> to whom he presented the struggle of the colonies in a favorable light, are very characteristic for his attitude toward the political events of his time. The results of his political studies up to the time of the American war for liberty are laid down in two treatises: "Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht," and "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" both published in 1784 in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.

How jubilantly German literature greeted the Revolutionary War has been clearly and exhaustively shown in two recent papers by J. T. Hatfield and E. Hochbaum, and by J. A. Walz.<sup>9</sup> The poets of Storm and Stress, such as Klinger and Lenz, were influenced by the revolt of the colonies. Schiller, Herder, Wieland, Voss, Leopold von Stolberg, Schubart, Klopstock, Gleim and others exalted the glory of Franklin and Washington, denounced the disgraceful soldier-traffic of German princes, and strongly supported the liberal aspirations of the Americans. It was, to be sure, not the political events as such that awakened this overwhelming sympathy for America in the hearts of these poets, but the humanitarian ideals which they saw realized in the victorious struggle of the colonies. "Our men of learning

---

*Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*.—P. L. Haworth, *Frederick the Great and the Revolution*.—Rosengarten, *Frederick the Great and the United States*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. W. Schubert, "Immanuel Kant und seine Stellung zur Politik" etc., in *Raumers Histor. Taschenbuch*, 1838, p. 597.

<sup>9</sup> Hatfield and Hochbaum, "The Influence of the American Revolution upon German Literature" in *Americana Germanica*, III, nos. 3 and 4.—J. A. Walz, "The American Revolution and German Literature" in *Modern Language Notes*, no. 6-8 (1901).



and our poets," says Robert Prutz, "believed that there were ideas here at work very similar to those so often dreamed of: all men brethren, heaven on earth, and Astraea in person mistress of the new Utopia."<sup>10</sup> Gervinus expresses the same thought: "The distant events in America, of which only the shining rays could be seen, the character of Franklin, so congenial to German *Gemütlichkeit*, all this contributed to link ideal with reality in political minds."<sup>11</sup>

The *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of the year 1783 once more voiced the joy of the poets in a sublime ode, "Die Freiheit Amerikas," which begins with the words:

Frei bist du, (sag's in höherem Siegeston,  
Entzücktes Lied), frei, frei nun Amerika,  
Erschöpft, gebeugt, bedeckt mit Schande  
Weicht dein Feind, und du triumphierst.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, quite a number of German folksongs appeared in the seventies and eighties dealing with the causes of the Revolutionary War, the German mercenaries going to America, and the conclusion of peace in 1783.<sup>13</sup>

On the stage, as well, incidents of the American Revolutionary War were presented. Rosengarten calls attention to *Der Hessische Officier*, a curious little play printed in Göttingen in 1781 and characteristic as showing the interest in America at the time of its publication. "The scene," he says, "is laid in Philadelphia during its occupancy by the British, and Indians,

<sup>10</sup> Rob. Prutz, "Die politische Poesie der Deutschen," in *Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch*, I. Jahrg. 1843, p. 443.

<sup>11</sup> Gervinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, V, 424.

<sup>12</sup> The author who signed J. F. H-1, was professor at a German university. —Cf. H. P. Gallinger, *Die Haltung der deutschen Publizistik zu dem amerik. Unabhängigkeitskriege 1775-1783*, Diss.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Histor. Volkslieder der Zeit von 1756-1871*, coll. and ed. by F. W. Freiherr v. Dittfurth, II, 4, 5, 7, 32-36, 370-373.

Quakers, English, German, and American soldiers, and negroes are among the dramatic persons. It must have been written by some one who had been here, for it shows great familiarity with the city and the conflicting parties residing or stationed here during the Revolution."<sup>14</sup>

That the enthusiasm of the poets of that time was sentimental and superficial, becomes evident from the fact that a change of feeling towards America quickly took place as soon as the cruelties of the French Revolution came to light. When Romanticism with its one-sided intellectual interests and absorbing aesthetic enthusiasm made its entrance into German literature, America was hardly considered further.

A permanent place, however, was assured to the United States through the Revolutionary War within the sphere of German journalism, which developed rapidly in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> As early as the seventies interest in politics had begun to awaken among the Germans as a result of stirring events in foreign countries, and after 1776 popular treatises, scientific works, and descriptive literature on America were published in increasing numbers. Among all classes of the people there was a free and lively discussion of the causes, justification, and consequences of the American war. Newspapers and important magazines furnished reports and interesting accounts. Statistical material, historical and geographical publications, translations of English and French works, all kinds of news from the New World, especially the letters and diaries of German mercenaries who had served in the Revolutionary War, familiarized the German people more and more

<sup>14</sup> Rosengarten, "American History from German Archives," etc., in *Pennsylv. German Society Proc.*, v. 13, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. H. P. Gallinger (see note 12) and G. S. Ford, "Two German Publicists on the American Revolution" in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, VIII (1909).

with the new continent and its inhabitants. All this body of information formed a reservoir of fact and legend about America which was an abundant source of material and inspiration for the writers of imaginative literature in the new century as well as for the historians and geographers.

Gallinger in his essay *Die Haltung der deutschen Publizistik zu dem amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskriege* gives a list of those journals and periodicals that made America a subject of discussion at that time. He says: "Immediately after the beginning of the war, in the year 1775, great interest was manifested in it in Germany, as can be seen from the rather detailed accounts in the newspapers. In the following three years a great number of publications appeared which had their origin in the struggle. From 1778 on the interest in the question of right decreased. Although in the last years a considerable number of works appeared dealing generally with the war and the history of America, comparatively little controversial literature was published. According to Professor Sprengel's statement, there was universal and uninterrupted interest in the struggle throughout Germany."<sup>16</sup>

Of the political-historical publications referring to America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century first consideration must be given to Schloezer's *Briefwechsel* and Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik*.

August Ludwig Schloezer was professor of History and Statistics in Göttingen. His *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts* appeared there in sixty issues at irregular intervals from February 1776 until May 1782 and was widely read. The references to America in this periodical consist of statistical, historical, polemical, and descriptive information. Numerous letters mainly from officers of the Hessian troops in America written to their relatives at home give interesting

<sup>16</sup> Gallinger, *op. cit.*, p. 72 ff.

details about the country and its inhabitants, reflecting the first impressions gained in the new land.

In regard to the constitutional question Schloezer was decidedly on the side of England. "He raved wildly against the North Americans, as if he had been a genuine native of Old England."<sup>17</sup> Schloezer speaks of the "American mob"; he calls the colonists "rebels," and is enraged at German sympathies for the Americans. Zermelo points out that Schloezer, in spite of his liberal tendencies, looked on the revolt from the standpoint of his colleagues in Göttingen and his patrons in Hanover, that he was without sympathy for republicanism, but that his information about America, in spite of his partiality, was reliable and valuable.<sup>18</sup>

That Schloezer's pro-British feeling did not prejudice him against America in other than political respects is proved by many notes in his *Correspondence* which give a favorable account of the country and its inhabitants. Ford, therefore, comes to this conclusion: "An examination of the *Briefwechsel* leaves no question that its editor was opposed to the colonists in their struggle, but, contrary to the general view, it convinces me that the material furnished in the sixty issues was on the whole likely to put the colonists in a favorable light before the intelligent German public."<sup>19</sup>

As early as 1771, in the preface to the translation of an English geographical work *Erdbeschreibung von America*, Schloezer had pointed out how near America had drawn to Europe, how important the New World had become to the Old World. It is impossible, he feels, not to take notice of America in modern history. Not only statesmen, scholars, and business men, but

<sup>17</sup> F. C. Schlosser, *Geschichte d. 18. Jhs.*, IV, 245.

<sup>18</sup> Zermelo, "Aug. Ludw. Schloezer, ein Publicist im alten Reich," in *Jahresbericht über die Friedrich-Werdersche Gewerbeschule in Berlin*, 1875, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Ford (see note 15), p. 167.



even plain readers of newspapers now need information about America, each for a different purpose. There can be no doubt that Schloezer was instrumental in arousing interest in America, an interest which not only attracted the attention of the masses in Germany, but was soon to influence the imagination of German poets and novelistic writers.

Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart<sup>20</sup> also frequently refers to America in his *Deutsche Chronik*. This semi-weekly journal, published from 1774 to 1777 in Augsburg and Ulm, was devoted to literature and politics and enjoyed an ever increasing popularity. Schubart, a genuine Swabian, a passionate defender of republican liberty, naturally sympathized with the colonists, although he had the exalted ideas of British liberalism. As Gallinger puts it, "His zeal for the cause of the Americans was restrained only by his love of Old England."<sup>21</sup> "There is hardly an issue," says Ford, "that does not give some space to America. He says that everybody is absorbed in the news from this country. Nothing in all the world is so talked about and discussed. He reports everything he can get. Sometimes it is a letter, sometimes it is a clipping. Sometimes it is a vision of the year 2400, picturing the twelve colonies as ruling over all that part of the world, with America the home of the sciences and of religion pure and undefiled."<sup>22</sup>

Ludwig Wekhrlin,<sup>23</sup> another influential South-German journalist, took a decidedly hostile attitude toward the colonies in his magazine *Chronologen*, published in twelve volumes from

<sup>20</sup> Chr. Fr. Schubart (1739-1791), poet, journalist, and musician, lived in Mannheim, Augsburg, and Ulm. From 1777 to 1787 he was a political prisoner on the Hohenasperg, later stage-manager in Stuttgart.

<sup>21</sup> Gallinger, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Ford (see note 15), p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin (1739-1792), a popular journalist, lived in or near Nördlingen, Württemberg, where he published his journals, *Chronologen* and *Ungeheuer*.



1779 to 1783 in Nördlingen. He feared that America's Declaration of Independence might separate this country from Europe, not only politically, but also in regard to commerce and colonization, thus impairing European civilization. He concludes his remarks on this subject with the emphatic statement that the Americans were madmen running about in broad daylight with torches in their hands to look for the day.

Other periodicals discussing the Revolutionary War are the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* (Lauenburg and Göttingen, 1775-1784), *Deutsches Museum* (Leipzig, 1776-1788), *Bibras Journal von und für Deutschland* (1784 ff.), Wieland's *Der Deutsche Merkur* (Weimar, 1773-1784), *Amerikanisches Archiv* (Braunschweig, 1777-1778), Jakobi's *Iris* (Düsseldorf, 1775), Köster's *Neueste Staatsbegebenheiten* (Frankfurt and Mainz, 1775-1779), *Historisch-Genealogischer Kalender* (Leipzig, 1784).<sup>24</sup> All of them defend the cause of the colonies and pay the highest tribute to the zeal for liberty and the valor displayed by the Americans in their fierce struggle for independence.

It is of special interest to note that the weekly *Nachrichten zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, published from 1775 on in Stuttgart, and edited in 1781 by young Schiller, devotes considerable space to America. The Revolutionary War was the main topic of the political news of this journal. Its political standpoint, to be sure, was just as undecided and immature as that of every other publication in this century of political infancy. Moreover, the Swabians had always looked upon England as representing an ideal form of liberal government. Once the London correspondent of the journal raises the question: "Has not England the right to rule her subjects and to protect her states against rebels?" On the whole, however, the paper prefers to side with the colonies and publishes with evident sympathy the letter of

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Americana Germanica*, III (1900), 350-352, also Gallinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 52.

an English officer who voices his displeasure over the war. Unreservedly it stands up for the Americans and Indians, inveighs against the inhuman warfare organized by the British with the help of their savage allies, and in several anecdotes scoffs at the "British lion."<sup>25</sup>

Summing up, we may say that all over Germany the war was the subject of earnest discussion in periodicals of standing. In Prussia and Swabia these sympathized almost universally with the Americans, while in Hanover they espoused the cause of England.

Not only the war, but also the new conditions in America resulting from the war were closely watched and eagerly discussed by a number of leading German journals. Slowly, but irresistibly, economic and social life is progressing in America. This is the tenor of Chr. Fr. D. Schubart's references to our country in his *Vaterlandschronik* (1787-1791). To comfort his compatriots who had, like himself, suffered under the intolerable caprice and selfishness of German princes, he exclaims: "Thirteen golden gates in the Republic are open to the victims of intolerance and despotism."<sup>26</sup>

The *Politisches Journal nebst Anzeige von gelehrten und anderen Sachen*, a monthly published from 1781 on by a society of learned men in Hamburg, maintains at first a more passive attitude towards the newly established Republic, but it judges the prevailing conditions soberly and impartially. We learn from its pages that everything is still in a stage of transition, unsettled, fluctuating, growing. There is as yet little happiness among the inhabitants, and poverty is not a thing unknown; commerce is in general insignificant, and there is hardly any respect for constitutional government.<sup>27</sup> In 1787 the periodical

<sup>25</sup> *Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, II, 361.

<sup>26</sup> Schubart's *Vaterlandschronik*, 1787, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> *Politisches Journal*, 1785, I, 213.

reports discord in the budding republic, frequent emigration to Canada and the South, dissension and anarchy within the States—all this evidencing the fact that independence was of no benefit to America.<sup>28</sup> An aristocratic régime lies heavily upon the country, it is stated; everything is in a state of confusion highly detrimental to national interests.<sup>29</sup> As the years pass and the century draws to a close, the *Journal* reflects conditions in a more favorable and promising light. We are informed that commerce with England is increasing, that new territories are joining the Union, that the Indians are in retreat before the settlers, that public instruction in the higher schools is improving and education progressing among the masses. From 1792 to 1794 the journal contains commercial reports of the United States, from 1797 to 1799 it notes repeatedly the severe loss of life through yellow fever and devastating war with the aborigines.

The *Neues Göttingisches historisches Magazin*, a quarterly edited by C. Meiners and L. T. Spittler, frequently received information from America in the years 1790-1794. During this period its columns contain an anthropological treatise on the Indians,<sup>30</sup> official documents from the War Department of the Union,<sup>31</sup> a favorable commercial report issued by Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury,<sup>32</sup> a survey of American newspapers,<sup>33</sup> and other interesting information of a semi-scientific sort.

In 1793 (Nov.) the *Neue Teutsche Merkur* gives to its readers an excellent description of the new City of Washington, which, at that time, was in process of construction and promised to

<sup>28</sup> *Polit. Journal*, 1787, I, 475, 711.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1787, II, 357.

<sup>30</sup> *Neues Gött. hist. Magazin*, 1790, pp. 102-156.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1792, IV, 708.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1794, I, 57.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

become a second Rome. Furthermore, the journal publishes in 1797 an interesting sketch taken from an English book of travel, "A visit to the home of President Washington," in addition, an essay on ancient fortifications in North America, and a letter from Philadelphia, in which the writer, a German-American, discusses American literature and pleasures, presenting his adopted country, to be sure, in a very unfavorable light.<sup>34</sup>

All these periodicals presuppose, of course, circles of educated readers interested in transatlantic news. Such a growing interest could not fail to prepare the ground for a presentation of America within the sphere of imaginative literature in the years to come.

That the foundation of our republic was a political event of such importance that it engaged the closest attention of German scholars, we shall see when we now turn to noteworthy historical works on America issued in this period.<sup>35</sup>

The first fundamental, comprehensive work on America as a republic was J. J. Moser's *Nordamerika nach den Friedensschlüssen vom Jahre 1783* (Leipzig, 1784).<sup>36</sup> The author begins with a discussion of the various stages of the conclusion of peace in 1783. In regard to the British-American controversy he reserves his own opinion and simply states the views of others. He takes up the climate and physical features, the inhabitants

<sup>34</sup> *Neue Teutsche Merkur*, 1793 (Nov.), p. 217; 1797 (April), pp. 5, 50, 168

<sup>35</sup> We pass over, as lying outside of our field of research, publications which, appearing during the Revolutionary War, treat America as a British colony, as L. A. Baumann's *Abriss der Staatsverfassung der vornehmsten Länder in Amerika* (1776) and Chr. Leist's *Beschreibung des Britischen Amerika* (1778).

<sup>36</sup> Johann Jakob Moser (1701-1785), professor of German political science in Tübingen, later chancellor of the university in Frankfurt a/O. Like Schubart, he fell a victim to ducal tyranny in Württemberg and was from 1759 to 1764 a political prisoner at the Hohentwiel. His writings, comprising 500 to 600 volumes, deal for the most part with German and international law.



and their religion, treating each State separately. Special sections of the work refer to the American landscape, to charts and publications about the country, and to international European law in its bearing on America.

Following closely upon the war of the Revolution appeared in 1785 (Frankenthal) the *Geschichte der Revolution in Nordamerika* by Matthias Christian Sprengel.<sup>37</sup> Sprengel was thoroughly conversant with British colonial history, which was a favorite subject of his academic lectures. How great an interest his students took in his favorite study is evidenced by his remark: "In my 'American war' my lecture-room looks really like a black cave or the ill-reputed 'Black Hole' (of Calcutta)."<sup>38</sup> As early as 1777 he had published his *Briefe den gegenwärtigen Zustand von Nordamerika betreffend*, written in the ardent pro-British spirit of Schloezer. Much more conciliatory toward the American cause is his attitude in his *Geschichte der Revolution in Nordamerika*, mentioned above. This work, based on extensive bibliographical sources, which are, to be sure, mostly English, is divided into two main parts. The first gives an account of the historical development of each State, including its political constitution. In the second part, which treats the History of American Independence, the author discusses at length the British-American controversy, taking sides here with the Americans. A special chapter is devoted to a characterization of American military and naval leaders. In considering the results of the war for America and Europe Sprengel points out:

<sup>37</sup> M. Chr. Sprengel (1746-1803), professor of geography and history. He began his academic lectures in Göttingen in 1778, as a follower of Schloezer, with a public lecture on the British colonies in America. Later he became professor in Halle a/S. His extensive scientific researches were largely devoted to American subjects.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted by F. Hänsch in *M. Chr. Sprengel, ein geogr. Publizist im Ausgange des 18. Jhs.*, p. 18.



"In the course of time this republic will soon outshine her sister-powers, and it will take more than centuries to confine her growing greatness," and "All Europe is now at liberty to purchase first-hand and at the lowest price American products, which otherwise she could obtain only by way of England and at a much higher price."<sup>39</sup> Sprengel through his far-reaching activity as a scholar and university teacher exerted a marked influence upon the intellectual and public life of his time. As the editors of Georg Forster's works say, "Sprengel began to lead the German people out into the wide world."<sup>40</sup>

Another historical publication, Fr. Seidel's<sup>41</sup> *Die Staatsverfassungen der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Berlin, 1795) gave its readers very valuable information about the characteristic features of the United States government and about the new spirit of liberty that permeated American political and social institutions. This work appeared as Part IV of the German edition of Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution*. In the preface to this edition the German editor extols the Revolutionary War as a heroic struggle overshadowing entirely the long-admired deeds of the Roman republic. Ramsay, he says, deserves credit for the calm and unassuming manner in which he presents the events of the war. In the first part of his treatise Seidel undertakes to interpret the "spirit of the Constitution of the United States." He discusses the political system of the Union and the character of its population, and he then goes on to set forth the principles of American government, as guaranteeing the liberty of the people and the political rights and duties of American citizens. The second part contains the constitutions of the States; the third, the Constitution of the

<sup>39</sup> Sprengel, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>40</sup> G. Forster's *Sämtliche Schriften*, I, p. vi.

<sup>41</sup> Günther Karl Friedr. Seidel (1764-1800), professor of history at the Berlinisch-Kölnisches Gymnasium.

Union. The work is supplemented by official documents concerning the history of the Revolutionary War and by annotated statements of Vice-president John Adams, referring to the cause of the American Revolution. An especially valuable paragraph enables the reader to inform himself about all English and German literature on the war which had been published up to that time.

In addition to the historians, a number of leading scholars in the field of geography and ethnology drew the attention of the German public to America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. L. T. V. Spittler<sup>42</sup> in Göttingen was one of the first who felt the necessity for the historian to study ancient and modern physical geography, including also America in the sphere of his researches. After him a special place was assigned to the geography of America by A. Fr. Büsching<sup>43</sup> in his publications *Magazin für die neuere Historie und Geographie von 1767 an* (Halle a/S.) and *Wöchentliche Nachrichten von neuen geographischen, statistischen u. a. Büchern* (Berlin, 1773-1787).

The first independent and comprehensive presentation of the geography of the United States was undertaken by Daniel Ebeling<sup>44</sup> in his *Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika*, published in five volumes by Bohn in Hamburg in 1793. For decades thereafter this work was the richest source of information for all those in Germany who were interested in the study of America. After Ebeling's death, in 1817, an article in Cotta's

<sup>42</sup> Ludw. Tim. Freiherr v. Spittler (1752-1810), a political writer, professor of philosophy in Göttingen, 1779-1797.

<sup>43</sup> A. Fr. Büsching (1724-1793), originator of the modern politico-statistical method of geography. Professor of theology in Göttingen, after 1767 member of the supreme consistorial court and headmaster of the Graue Kloster Gymnasium in Berlin. Most of his works are in the field of geography.

<sup>44</sup> Christoph Daniel Ebeling (1741-1817), after 1784 professor of history and the Greek language at the Gymnasium in Hamburg. He edited a series of descriptions of travel from 1780 to 1790.

*Allgemeine Zeitung*, written in his memory, called public attention to the incomparable merits of his work, and especially to the painstaking original researches on which it is based. The writer points out how Ebeling, regardless of expense and difficulties, never flagged in his efforts to obtain complete information from America. In writing his book he made use of all kinds of publications from the States, from important newspapers to insignificant leaflets and pamphlets, and also sought information from educated Americans in Hamburg. Even in America Ebeling's geography was well spoken of and was said to compare favorably with geographical works by native authors.<sup>45</sup>

It may be worth mentioning, in this connection, that these men, Ebeling, Schubart, Moser, Spittler, Büsching, Sprengel, Seidel, never visited America in person. All of them, however, took pains to gather their material from reliable sources not only of English but also of American origin. Besides, they maintained close connections either with German-Americans or with travelers who had visited this country. They doubtless also obtained first-hand news from German mercenaries after their return from the New World, among whom were many men of culture. Furthermore, the cities where most of the works on America were published had a special regional interest in this country, Thus Hamburg, the great seaport of Germany, was especially attracted by the economic and geographical conditions of the Union, just as Göttingen, through its relations with England, was interested in our political development, while Swabia, always a friend of liberty, cherished hopes that the victory of the American colonies would mean the beginning of a new era of freedom even for Europe.

<sup>45</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 31, 1817. (Appendix).—Israel Thorndike, a merchant in Boston, purchased in 1818 for the use of Harvard the library of Ebeling, which consists of 4,000 volumes and is remarkably rich in works on American history and antiquities.

In addition to his comprehensive work, above mentioned, Ebeling together with Professor Hegewisch in Kiel published a geographico-historical magazine devoted to the study of America: *Amerikanisches Magazin oder authentische Beiträge zur Erdbeschreibung, Staatskunde und Geschichte von Amerika, besonders aber der Vereinigten Staaten*, which appeared in four parts from 1795 to 1797 in Hamburg, another evidence of this city's importance as a gateway for German scientific knowledge of the Western World. In the *Magazin* as well, a wealth of information was gathered from the most trustworthy sources, such as official American documents and biographies published in the United States. Beside news-items from across the sea, we find in the first issue a comparative survey of the constitution of the various States of the Union, an economic report concerning the whole country, given by the Federal commissioner of public revenues, an official list of exports from the States, a description of a tour on foot through New Jersey made by Dr. F. H. Autenrieth in 1795, and a list of publications, such as books, charts, engravings, etc. referring to America. The second issue contains information about immigration and settlements in Pennsylvania, financial reports, and a catalogue of all newspapers and magazines printed in the United States up to 1789. The following issues contain stories of the Revolutionary War, especially about Baron von Steuben, essays on American poetry, and reviews of letters written by German-Americans, who, to be sure, presented this country in an unfavorable light.

A real pioneer in the field of comparative geography and ethnology was Georg Forster,<sup>46</sup> famous both as a scientist and

<sup>46</sup> Johann Georg Forster (1754-1794), when sixteen years old, translated various books of travel into German. Later he made frequent journeys through Europe, and in 1772 set forth on his voyage of three years around the world. Here he laid the basis for his knowledge of America and his wide interest and scholarly attainment in the physical sciences.



prose-writer of Storm and Stress, who at the age of eighteen with his father accompanied Captain Cook on his journey round the world. Forster was the first of the great German circumnavigators of the globe and united a keen scientific interest with a truly cosmopolitan attitude of mind. His *Reise um die Welt*, published in 1784, contains descriptions of nature and of peoples which for vividness and colorful vigor have never been surpassed in the German language. It was he who through his works gave to the German public the first intimate knowledge of the northern regions of North America, stretching between the fortieth and seventieth degrees of latitude. He traces the various voyages of discovery made on the Western coast of North America from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century and discusses the plants and animals of those vast northern regions, the character of the Indians, and the extensive fur trade with them. Later on he shows his continued interest in American affairs in his "Erinnerungen aus dem Jahre 1790 in historischen Gemälden und Bildnissen" by a eulogy of Benjamin Franklin, "founder of the North American republic, inventor of the lightning rod, benefactor of his country, friend and brother of savages and white men, most humane and happiest of all who have been chosen as contributors to the sublime work of inaugurating the Golden Age of Humanity."<sup>47</sup> In 1781-1790 Forster's father, Johann Reinhold (1724-1798), also a traveler and scientist, published together with Sprengel *Beiträge zur Völker- und Länderkunde* in fourteen volumes. Here, through translations of American and English publications, many details are given regarding nature, manners, and public and private life in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Virginia. In Georg Forster's *Correspondence* we find a letter written to his wife from Arras, dated August 21, 1793, wherein the writer expresses his views

<sup>47</sup> G. Forster's *Kleine Schriften*, VI, 70.



about the free government of the United States, in language which reflects his keen disappointment with the French Revolution. "It is," he says, "the freest government ever known to us in a great commonwealth, for the only aristocracy allowed by it is that of wealth which cannot be abolished without leaving behind a Spartan community that is hardly practicable." "Therefore," he writes in conclusion, "I still cherish hope that public happiness will come also to our continent; but nobody can foretell how long yet we shall have to fight, because compared with the cold-blooded Americans we are mad-caps and our principles are rotten to the core."<sup>48</sup> It was from such passages that, in the following decades of national misfortune and political oppression, there developed in Germany a popular belief rising at times to a well-nigh fatalistic superstition, that Europe's fate was sealed and that America was the land of hope for mankind. This obsession, although derided by some as an illusion and attacked by others as unpatriotic, never quite ceased to possess the minds of many Germans. The belief that Europe would dissolve into political and social chaos and America would become the refuge of human liberty was revived by liberal-minded writers in the new century and became, as we shall see, one of the principal features in the romantic conception of America.

Among the historico-geographical works on America of this period must be included E. A. W. Zimmermann's<sup>49</sup> *Frankreich und die Freistaaten von Nordamerika*. The first volume of this work appeared in 1795 in Berlin, the second in 1799 in Braun-

<sup>48</sup> Forster's *Briefwechsel*, II, 551.

<sup>49</sup> Eberhard Aug. Wilh. v. Zimmermann (1743-1815), court-councillor in the duchy of Brunswick, a scientist and geographer. He traveled through northern and western Europe in 1767-1770 for scientific purposes. Later he was professor at the Collegium Carolinum in Brunswick. From 1802-1813 he edited the *Taschenbuch der Reisen oder Unterhaltende Darstellung der Entdeckungen des 18. Jhs*

schweig. The author was well informed about the United States through his activity as an editor of a number of important earlier books of travel and through his frequent correspondence with friends in Boston and New York. The background of his extensive work is the revolution in France and America. The author compares these countries with regard to the nature of their soil, their physical products, their population, their form of government, and discusses the radical differences in the character of the countries and their inhabitants, and the consequent divergent course which the revolution took in each.

From an anthropological standpoint Herder, in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1787), devotes a special chapter<sup>49a</sup> to the discussion of the characteristic features of the American Indians. He is of the opinion that the uniformity in the physical organization of this race points to a common home-land from which it emigrated and which could only have been Asia. Furthermore, he points out that the accounts of travelers, explorers, and missionaries concur in emphasizing that a certain predominant culture is the main character of the Indians of various tribes. "This character consists in their healthful and persistent strength and their barbarically proud courage regarding liberty and war, and determines their way of living and their domestic affairs, their training and government, their business and customs in peace and war." Herder shows how this character is derived from the gradual migration of the Indians from Northern Asia to America and, furthermore, from the physical condition of the new country. In a similar way the structure of their bodies, the formation of their heads, and their copper-red color could be explained. Finally, the writer points out that the accounts of travelers present the Indians of certain tribes as well-formed, good-looking, and as clean as any human beings on earth, and

<sup>49a</sup> Part II, Book VI, chap. VI.

he draws the conclusion that the prejudices of imbecility and baseness in regard to the Indians have to be discarded. Originally good-natured and innocent like children, they have turned suspicious, gloomy, and savage in the struggle against the climate, the hardships of nature, and their human oppressors, but their original trait of character is kindness and gentleness. It is interesting to note that Herder thus shows himself as a representative of the conception of the "gentle savage" which was later upheld by the Romanticists.

To the field of the natural history of America belongs a work of J. von Wangenheim<sup>50</sup>: *Beschreibung einiger nordamerikanischer Holz- und Buscharten mit Anwendung auf Teutsche Forsten* (1787). The author was, so far as we know, the only one of the Hessian "Landeskinder" who wrote on America. During the Revolutionary War he distinguished himself in the engagements at Brandywine and Charleston. Gifted with a keen sense of observation, he devoted his spare time to the study of the immense American forests. After his return to Europe (1784) he published his treatise on this subject, in which he gives detailed information about the various kinds of trees in the forests of America, mainly in the States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He also points out to what extent these trees and shrubs could be utilized in German forests.

A large part of the intense interest which Germany took in American affairs in the last quarter of the eighteenth century must be ascribed to the publication of letters and diaries of German officers and privates who fought in the Revolutionary War. A number of these appeared in Schloezer's *Correspondence* and have been translated into English by W. L. Stone.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Fr. Adam Julius v. Wangenheim (1749-1800), a forester and an author of works relating to the science of forestry. In 1777-1784 he fought with the Hessians in the Revolutionary War. Before his voyage to America he lived in Thuringia and after his return to Europe in Gumbinnen.

<sup>51</sup> W. L. Stone, *Letters of Brunswick and Hessian officers during the Revolu-*

J. G. Rosengarten in his "American History from German Archives with Reference to the German Soldiers and Franklin's Visit to Germany"<sup>52</sup> discusses these letters and journals at length. What makes the descriptions of the country and the inhabitants as contained in these memoirs interesting and valuable is the fact that they come for the most part from men of culture and from keen observers. The reports which the writers send of the New World are the earliest first-hand German impressions of America and its resources, and they echo the surprise which the possibilities of the new country aroused in the minds of men well trained to appreciate and adequately to record both physical and moral values. These publications form a rich source of information about the manners and customs of the American people in the Eastern colonies, and about city life and country life. They picture in vivid colors the American military and political leaders and the continental troops, and they describe military events in accurate detail. "The cor-

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tion.—The most important of these letters and journals are: *Diary of Captain Wiederholut from Oct. 7, 1776 to Dec. 7, 1780* (*Am. Germ.* IV, no. 1), *Döhla's Diary (1777-1783)* (*Pennsylv. Germ. Society, Proc.* XXIV), *Waldeck's Diary (1776-1780)* (*Am. Germ.* VI, 1907), *Journal of Du Roi the Elder* (*Germ. Am. Annals* IX, 1911), *Journal of Captain Pausch* (*A. G.* III, 1900), *Popp's Journal* (cf. Rosengarten's publication on this subject); memoirs, letters and journals of Major-General Riedesel; letter of Major-General Steuben to Privy-councillor Baron v. Frank in Hechingen (1779).

An interesting account of conditions in Pennsylvania and New Jersey before the Revolutionary War and of military episodes in the war is given in *Buettner, der Amerikaner. Eine Selbstbiographie Johann Carl Buettners, ehemaligen nordamerikanischen Kriegers*, (2nd edition, Camenz, 1828) (transl. into English and published by Heartman, New York). The author, born in 1754 in Prussian Saxony as the son of a Protestant clergyman, came to America in the seventies and, when the war broke out, served first in the volunteer corps of the German major Ortendorff under the direction of Washington, and later with the Hessians in the British army.

<sup>52</sup> *Pennsylv. German Soc., Proc.*, v. XIII.



respondents," says Ford, "are intelligent, fair-minded, dispassionate. The letters of the French allies are hardly more favorable to the Americans."<sup>53</sup> We are especially interested in Steuben's report on the first impressions which he received in America. In a letter addressed to Baron v. Frank in Hechingen, dated from the Camp at New Windsor, on the North River, July 4, 1779, he writes: "What a beautiful, what a happy country this is! Without kings, without prelates, without blood-sucking fermiers-généraux, and without idle barons. Here everybody is prosperous. Poverty is an evil unknown. Indeed, I should become too prolix were I to give an account of the prosperity and happiness of these people."<sup>54</sup>

Schloezer<sup>55</sup> in a foot-note commenting upon these letters (1780) points out the exclusively favorable impression made by America on the writers, and draws the conclusion that, after all, the Americans could not have been so badly off under the tyranny of the British. There is no doubt that these reports were read in Germany with surprise and eager interest. Germans now knew something about the New World, even if the information obtained was sometimes not entirely in accord with reality. It is, indeed, well to consider what it meant for the knowledge of America in Germany when 17,000 mercenaries returned from the war and gave a vivid narrative of their experience in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Ford (see note 15), p. 157.—Cf. Rattermann, *D. A. Magazin*, I (1887).

<sup>54</sup> W. L. Stone, *op. cit.* p. 244.

<sup>55</sup> Schloezer, *Briefwechsel*, VII, no. 42.—Fr. Kapp, *Leben des amerikanischen Fr. Wilh. v. Steuben*, p. 634.

<sup>56</sup> That not all the German princes stood on the side of England, is shown by the attitude of Pfalz-Zweibrücken. The brothers Christian and Wilhelm von Forbach, sons of Duke Christian von Pfalz-Zweibrücken, joined the French auxiliaries with their regiment and took part in the siege and capture of Yorktown in 1781. (Cf. K. Th. Heigel, "Die Beteiligung des Hauses Zweibrücken am nordamerik. Befreiungskrieg," in *Sitzungsberichte der Kgl. Bayr. Akad. d. Wissensch.*, Jahrg. 1912).



A. B. Faust, in the fourth chapter of *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, where he discusses the non-English writings, points to an additional source of information on America for the Germans. He mentions the large bodies of Lutheran, Reformed, and Moravian Germans in Pennsylvania and neighboring colonies, and states that their ministers frequently sent extensive reports and letters to the fathers of the church at home. These reports, as in the *Hallesche Nachrichten*, written by the Reverend H. Melchior Mühlberg (1711-1787), and the *Urlisperger Nachrichten*, or the diaries of the Moravian missionaries, give us, as Faust notes, "an authentic picture not only of the beginnings and growth of the Lutheran Church in America, but also of pioneer conditions in many of the colonies."<sup>57</sup>

The first noteworthy German book of travels in America in the eighteenth century was written by Johann David Schöpf,<sup>58</sup> who as a military surgeon accompanied the Ansbach mercenaries to America. In 1788 he published in Erlangen his *Reise durch einige der mittleren und südlichen Vereinigten nord-amerikanischen Staaten nebst Florida und den Bahamainseln, unternommen in den Jahren 1783 und 1784*.

Schöpf's work, although written from the standpoint of a scientist, is entertaining reading. The author discourses on the climate, mode of living, and sanitary conditions, on public instruction and scientific studies, on natural resources and commerce, and notes for us the traces left by the war. The work is, indeed, a mine of information especially for investigators of the history of German immigration in America. Morrison in his biography of Schöpf says: "These volumes are undoubtedly

<sup>57</sup> *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, IV, 576 f.

<sup>58</sup> J. D. Schöpf (1752-1800) was a scientist and surgeon as well as a writer of travels. He was in America from 1777 to 1784, six years as an army surgeon in hospitals in New York and Philadelphia. After his return to Europe he lived as court physician and army surgeon in Bayreuth.

the most valuable of their sort for the years after the Revolution, —readable, authoritative, comprehensive, full of wit, in some respects altogether unique.”<sup>59</sup>

An interesting description of the country and inhabitants of Virginia and Kentucky as well as of the Indians and the conclusion of peace with them by the American Government, is contained in Heckewelder’s<sup>60</sup> *Reise von Bethlehem in Pennsylvania bis zum Wabash Fluss im nordwestlichen Gebiet der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*, edited and annotated by Sprengel in 1797 (Halle a/S.). The report of this journey, undertaken in 1792, gives abundant material concerning the regions which Heckewelder traversed when accompanying General Rufus Putnam, plenipotentiary of the American Government for concluding peace with the Indians on the Wabash. The author writes most interestingly of the French settlement at Gallipolis on the Ohio River in Ohio, and the goldsmiths and watchmakers who lived there, of his journey through Kentucky, including the customs and manners of the population in this State. He gives details about such places as Wheeling, Charleston, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, etc., and recites the formalities underlying the conclusion of peace with the aborigines.

The very best evidence of the fact that America attracted intense interest in Germany during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, is furnished by the great number of German translations of foreign literature on America that appeared in this period. These publications, coming for the most part from writers of literary fame, are partly descriptive and partly historical. They contain abundant information about the American Revolutionary War, about the character of the

<sup>59</sup> A. Morrison, “Dr. J. D. Schöpf” in *G. A. Annals*, VIII, 1910, p. 252.

<sup>60</sup> John Gottlieb Ernest Heckewelder (1743-1823), American Moravian missionary of German descent, lived for forty years among the Indian tribes in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Canada, then in Bethlehem, Pa.

American colonists and especially of the aborigines, and set forth details regarding districts unknown before to the reading public in Germany. In a period of deep anxiety about the depressing and chaotic conditions in their own country, the Germans of the end of the century turned eagerly to such works, catching therein the vision of an enterprising, active people that on a free soil was working out its problems in a spirit of sovereign independence. It followed as a result that, shortly after the opening of the new century, writers of imaginative literature, impressed by the stimulating news which found its way across the sea to them and their countrymen, began to give eloquent expression to their thoughts and hopes in regard to America.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> In addition to the works already mentioned, the following translations of foreign narratives of travel and books of history and description brought America and its life close to the German reading public. In 1779 appeared in Leipsic William Russel's *History of America* in German, in 1782 a translation of J. Adair's *History of the North American Indians*; in 1785 a German version of Abbé Raynal's *History of the Revolution in America*. In 1788 appeared Franz Soullès' *Vollständige Geschichte der Revolution von Nordamerika*, translated from the French by K. Hammerdörfer. In 1792 appeared J. P. Brissot de Warville's *Neue Reise durch die nordamerik. Freistaaten im Jahre 1788*, aus dem Französischen übersetzt von Joh. R. Forster. In the same year G. Forster translated the letters of Thomas Anburey: *Travels in the interior part of America*, and edited a *Geschichte der Reisen, die seit Cook an der Nordwest- und Nordostküste von Amerika und in dem nordöstlichen Amerika selbst von Meare, Dixon, Cox u. a. unternommen sind*. The work is based on English descriptions of travel. In 1793 E. A. W. Zimmermann published *Reisen durch Nord- und Südkarolina, Georgia, Ost- u. Westflorida, das Gebiet der Tscherokees, Creeks und Tscheckhaks*, transl. from the English edition of William Bartram. A description of the customs and manners of the American savages is contained in Zimmermann's translation of J. Long's English work in his *Land- u. Seereisen* (1791). In 1794 appeared a translation of David Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution*, in the following year a translation of Charles Stedman's historical work *Geschichte des Ursprungs, der Fortsetzung u. der Beendigung des amerik. Krieges*. In the same year Chr. Sprengel translated the *Geschichte der Neuen Welt* from the Spanish of Baptista Muñoz. William Robertson's *History of America* was

Typical for the attitude towards America which prevailed among the liberal element of the cultivated classes in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century is a letter of J. B. Erhard,<sup>62</sup> the Nuremberg doctor and friend of Kant, Wieland, and Schiller, written to President Washington. This letter, dated Munich, February, 1794, was perhaps never sent, but strikingly reflects the high respect and even veneration in which America and its foremost representative was held in the hearts of many educated Germans. The writer reports that since his childhood, when he read the newspapers to his father in Nuremberg, he learned to respect and love Washington, the liberator of America, as a father, and that from the time when he began to think, that is to say when he heard the news of the Americans throwing the British tea into the sea at Boston, his only wish was to be in America.<sup>63</sup>

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translated by Schiller in 1798. In 1799 appeared from the French La Rochefoucauld Liancourt's *Reisen in den Jahren 1795-1797 durch alle an der See belegenen Staaten der nordamerik. Republik* and in 1800, from the English, Isaac Weld's *Reise durch die nordamerik. Freistaaten und durch Ober- u. Unter-canada in den Jahren 1795-1797*.

<sup>62</sup> Joh. Benj. Erhard (1766-1827), physician and philosopher, was born in Nuremberg. He was an autodidact and especially well versed in the philosophy of Kant, with whom he became acquainted on his journey to Copenhagen and Königsberg. After he had finished his studies, he practiced medicine at first in Nuremberg, and after 1799 in Berlin, but devoted most of his time to the writing of philosophical and political treatises, wherein he strongly advocated the rights of man.

<sup>63</sup> Varnhagen v. Ense, *Biographische Denkmale*, X, 71, (first published as a monograph in 1830, Stuttgart: *Denkwürdigkeiten des Philosophen und Arztes J. B. Erhard*).—According to information received from the Secretary of the Library of Congress, there is no record in the Washington papers in the Library's possession of any letter either from or to Johann Benjamin Erhard. The Secretary, however, notes that this is not conclusive evidence that the statement in von Ense's *Biographische Denkmale* is wrong, as many Washington papers were, unfortunately, destroyed in a fire just prior to the Civil War, and no record of what these were exists.



We now turn our attention to a work which had a powerful and unique influence on public opinion about America throughout Germany at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1797 Dietrich von Bülow<sup>64</sup> published *Der Freistaat von Nordamerika in seinem neuesten Zustand* (Berlin). Here for the first time a German author offers severe criticism of conditions in America and challenges current conceptions of our country as a sort of earthly paradise.

Bülow claims to give in his work the result of his personal observations in the United States. He declares that he had been there twice, in 1792 and in 1796, and that his first favorable impressions had decidedly changed in the course of time. Furthermore, he indicates his intention of enlightening the German public, led astray by selfish and prejudiced writers, through a presentation of the Americans as they really are.

The work is divided into four parts. In the first the author deals with the people of America. He states that he draws his facts from history as the best source for a presentation of the characteristic features and the political ideas and laws of the Americans. In his criticism of the American character the author attaches great importance to the descent of the immigrants, whether they are of New England, German, Irish, or Dutch stock. Furthermore, the political organization of the country is made responsible for a commercialism which the writer regards as very detrimental to morality. From letters of George Washington, which he considers genuine and official, Bülow intimates that the Americans in making war against Britain had been influenced not by patriotic motives, but by love of money, and that they had proved themselves very

<sup>64</sup> Dietrich Heinrich v. Bülow (1757-1803), an author of books on military science, a younger brother of the famous field-marshal Bülow v. Dennewitz. He was in America from Sept. 1791 to July 1792, and from Sept. 1795 to Oct. 1796.



ungrateful when the army was to be disbanded. In discussing American culture Bülow deplores the absence of a systematic national education and ventures to say: "The youth of the country is brought up in stupidity and license that goes on increasing." "In America, in general, neither body nor mind is trained."<sup>65</sup> He points to vices in vogue among the masses, to a conspicuous increase in fraud and murder in cities as well as in the country, and he criticizes the fact that justice is not administered free of charge. In addition, the writer finds signs of a slavish imitation of European manners. He arraigns the religious sects of the country for their fanaticism. The ambition of the American people is, he thinks, to earn money and to enjoy oneself, "but," he adds, "they consider it in general foolish to risk life and property for national honor."<sup>66</sup> The author has, however, words of praise for the democratic spirit of the Americans, so manifest in their wide-spread civil, religious, and economic liberty, and it is from this liberty that he predicts the most salutary results for the welfare of the Republic. Summing up his arguments, Bülow asserts in concluding the first part of his work that the Americans are exactly the product of their ancestry, of the physical nature of their country, and of prevailing political and social conditions. They are in no sense a youthful people, much less the simple, innocent, virtuous republicans that European opinion has made them out to be. It would come nearest to truth, the critic asserts, to picture them as young men, unnerved and degenerate through sensual luxury, who had come to an early old age and could never find their youth again.

In the second part of his work the author gives a description of the country. He praises the beautiful buildings in New York, such as St. Paul's Church and the residence of the Governor,

<sup>65</sup> von Bülow, *op. cit.*, I, 161.

<sup>66</sup> von Bülow, *op. cit.*, I, 229.

and calls special attention to Broadway and the views of the Hudson. He also mentions his friendly relations with Baron von Steuben.

The third part deals with the immigrants. In the fourth Bülow advances his opinions about the future of America and concludes his discussion with the following words: "For all these reasons I do not believe that America will quickly rise to such an extraordinary height as some prejudiced writers want to make us believe. It is still more problematic whether there will ever come a time when the United States will extend from sea to sea."<sup>67</sup>

Although in some parts of his work Bülow comments favorably on this country, the general impression which we gain from it is that of hostile criticism. It is, indeed, surprising and almost incomprehensible that a man of his intellect and refinement, with good opportunities to obtain first-hand information through influential connections, should have indulged in such exaggerated accusations against a people that had offered him hospitality. The only explanation for his attitude is that he was prejudiced for some reason or other. It is a fact that, when he was in America for the second time, he lost his fortune in disastrous speculations.<sup>68</sup>

The author's treatise found both approval and adverse criticism in Germany. The editor of *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur* points out in 1797<sup>69</sup> that unfavorable reports on America are increasing. He publishes a letter written by a German-American in Philadelphia, who speaks very harshly about the lack of culture and ideals in this country. In the June issue of the same periodical, in 1798, Bülow undertakes to justify his views as expressed in his work on America and especially his deductions

<sup>67</sup> v. Bülow, *op. cit.*, II, 192.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, III, 515.

<sup>69</sup> *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur*, June, 1797, p. 168.

from Washington's letters. He acknowledges the credit given to him by the editor for having opened the eyes of so many who did not see the faults of the American land and people, and for having thus earned German gratitude. To this Bülow adds that the shadows in his picture of America were by no means dark enough; that, for instance, the climate in the country was much more unhealthy than he had indicated in his work.<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, Bülow's arguments were eagerly disputed by men familiar with conditions in America. Ebeling in a review of Bülow's work, published in 1797 in the *Beiträge von gelehrten Sachen*, charges him with ignorance of the history and laws of the United States. He criticizes him for having based his presentation of America more on general conclusions than on personal experience and observations and for having made use of letters of Washington evidently fictitious.<sup>71</sup> Three decades later German critics were still concerned about Bülow's work. One of them is Dr. E. Brauns, a writer of a number of books on this country, who takes a sharply hostile attitude towards America's defamer in his *Ideen über die Auswanderung nach Nordamerika* (1827). He maintains that Bülow was eccentric, unsuccessful in his financial enterprises, and therefore highly embittered against the Western Republic.

There can, however, be no doubt that the general German conception of America and its presentation in German literature was strongly influenced by Bülow's work. A man of his culture, experience, and high standing was, of course, considered competent to pass judgment upon the New World. From him and his work a powerful and persistent current, hostile to America, was set in motion, in public opinion as well as in imaginative literature.

<sup>70</sup> *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur*, June, 1798, p. 129.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Amerikanisches Magazin*, IV, 170 f.

What was, then, we may well ask, the attitude of Germany's greatest poets in regard to this country at the close of the century?

After the songs of liberty in praise of the war for American independence had died away, the upper classes in Germany through the events of the French Revolution became disillusioned regarding popular sovereignty. The notions of liberty and equality, of government as a social contract, and of democracy as represented in American policies, were looked upon as the most dangerous and destructive ideas of the time. Moreover, the classical ideal, at its height in German literature from 1790 to 1800, had neither sympathy with the new republic in the West nor interest in its development. The representatives of this ideal were but little interested in the currents of contemporary history and life, beating so forcefully against the peaceful island of the German Renaissance. They turned their backs upon political reality, which faced them at home in a confused form, and viewed life and art through a shimmering veil of noble resignation:

In des Herzens heilig stille Räume musst du flüchten  
Aus des Lebens Drang.  
Freiheit wohnt nur in dem Reich der Träume,  
Und das Schöne blüht nur im Gesang.

In Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1794-1796) the characters are persons little concerned about the realities of life, without interest in political affairs. When the thought of America really happens to enter their minds, it is only for the reason that they hope to secure for themselves landed property there in order to escape from the threatening events of their time. Even in this work, then, appears the feeling that German conceptions of America were, after all, only the mirage of German ideals, ideals which must be realized in the Fatherland, if at all: "Hier oder nirgend ist Amerika!"



While in Germany the first important publications on America, dealing mainly with the history and geography of the country, did not appear till after the Revolutionary War, France and England had possessed an extensive literature on the New World since the sixteenth century. The traditional conception of the Western continent, as reflected in this literature, doubtless had considerable influence on the views of German poets and novelists in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> It will, therefore, be advisable in concluding our chapter, to state briefly through a few typical illustrations how America was presented in French and English works in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Tuckerman, in his valuable work *America and her Commentators* (1864), points out that from the descriptions of Jesuit missionaries to the reports of French officers in the Revolutionary War the characteristics of French opinions on America are a lively appreciation of nature in its primeval forms, a love of the free, independent life in the wilderness, and a peculiar sympathy with the conditions of social life on the new continent.<sup>73</sup> In recent years G. Chinard has made a special study of these conceptions in his work *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle* (1913). He shows how in numberless dramas, novels, idyls, descriptions of travels and explorations, French writers depicted America in those centuries as an enchanted wonderland. In a multitude of publications the Jesuit missionaries gave detailed accounts of their impressions and experiences especially among the savages. In their reports as well as in the works of such famous French travelers and explorers as Hennepin, Joutel, Lahontan,

<sup>72</sup> While we have good works dealing adequately with the influence of English literature of the eighteenth century on German writers, such works are missing in regard to French literature of that century.

<sup>73</sup> Tuckerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 89, 269.



Lafitau, Charlevoix, Le Page du Pratz, the American aborigines are almost unanimously presented as "good Indians," their simplicity and naïveté in contrast with the corrupted state of European civilization. Some of these writers drew graphic pictures of the simple delights of life in the wilderness, of birds and plants and beautiful natural scenes in Canada and Louisiana. François-Jean Chastellux, who resided in America in the second half of the eighteenth century, gave a detailed account of his observations in the Eastern districts of America during the War of Independence in his *Voyage dans l'Amérique septentrionale dans les années 1780-1781* and wrote in 1787 a *Discours sur les avantages et désavantages qui résultent pour l'Europe de la découverte de l'Amérique*. Brissot de Warville, who visited the New World in 1788, was enthusiastic in his admiration of the American revolution which, he was convinced, would bring America and Europe together in close commercial relations. Another noted traveler, C. F. Volney,<sup>74</sup> who went to America in 1795, wrote in the preface to his *Tableau du climat et du sol des États-Unis* (1803): "Here I beheld nothing but a splendid prospect of future peace and happiness, flowing from the wide extent of improvable territory, from the facility of securing property in land, from the necessity for activity and industry, and from the equity of government, a virtue which it owes to its very weakness."

That the romantic views of the missionaries and of the disciples of Rousseau concerning the American Indians did not remain unchallenged, is shown by the attitude of the Encyclopædists and particularly in the work of the Abbé Corneille de Pauw, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* (1768-1777). This work, published by the author during his residence in Berlin, was widely read all over Europe and sharply criticized. It pictures the Indians as in every way inferior to the Europeans,

<sup>74</sup> Chinard, *Volney et l'Amérique* etc. (Paris, 1923).

as primitive, imbecile, and miserable peoples, or, as the author says, "comme une race d'hommes qui ont tous les défauts des enfants, comme une espèce dégénérée du genre humain, lâche, impuissante, sans force physique, sans vigueur, sans élévation dans l'esprit."<sup>75</sup>

Of special interest is the work of a French nobleman, St. Jean de Crèveœur,<sup>76</sup> who lived near New York in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and published in English, in 1782, a sort of romance or prose idyl, entitled *Letters from an American Farmer*. With naïve enthusiasm the author depicts in these letters the independence, the resources, and the peace of an agricultural life in the Eastern States of America in his time. His book was translated into French, Dutch, and German,<sup>77</sup> and fascinated its readers to such an extent that many of them set forth to the banks of the Ohio and the Delaware, to a country where the struggle for existence seemed almost a thing unknown.

In Louvet de Couvray's novel *Les amours du Chevalier de*

<sup>75</sup> C. de Pauw, *op. cit.*, édition 1770, v. I, p. xiii.—The conception of America in French literature at the end of the eighteenth century is clearly presented by Bernard Fay in his valuable study "L'Amérique et l'esprit scientifique en France à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" (*Revue de Littérature Comparée*, Juillet-Septembre, 1923, p. 385). The author shows that about 1770 the fantastic conception of America yields to a more scientific one, particularly in respect to science, biology, and politics. He sums up his discussion of this subject in the words: "La plupart des livres sur les États-Unis de 1770 à 1790 apportent à les dépeindre des soucis plutôt d'ordre poétique et religieux que philosophique. Au cours de l'effort que faisait la France du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle pour se renouveler, elle adopta l'Amérique comme un stimulant pour son intelligence aussi bien que pour son cœur." (p. 406).

<sup>76</sup> Julia Post Mitchell, *St. Jean de Crèveœur*, New York, 1916.

<sup>77</sup> *Briefe eines amerikanischen Landmanns*. Aus dem Französischen übersetzt u. mit Anmerkungen begleitet von J. A. Götze, 3 Bde., Leipzig, 1788.—*Sittliche Schilderungen von Amerika in Briefen eines amerik. Gutsbesitzers an einen Freund in England*. Übersetzt von Siegbert, Liegnitz u. Leipzig, 1784.

*Faublas* (1787-1789) the cause of the colonies in the Revolutionary War is extolled. The Polish Count Pulauski, who fought gloriously, but vainly for the liberty of his native country against the Russians, had to leave Poland as an exile. He went to America in 1776 with his friend Lovynski to take part in the struggle of the Americans against England. The two friends came to Philadelphia, where Congress gave them commissions and employed them in the army of General Washington. Pulauski exposed his life in the war at the most dangerous posts, was mortally wounded, and fell as a champion of American liberty at the siege of Savannah in 1779. Before his end came, he pointed to young Lafayette nearby as to the worthy pupil of Washington who should soon be the Washington of his own country.<sup>78</sup>

The enthusiasm of the French people over the struggle of the American colonists for liberty is reflected in such poems as de Parny's and Dorat's "Épître aux Insurgents" (1777). The praise of the primitive man was sung in Dorat's poem "Aux Sauvages" (1780), beginning:

Sauvages, soyez nos modèles!  
 Le sentiment guide vos pas;  
 À sa loi vous êtes fidèles:  
 Que n'habité-je en vos climats!<sup>79</sup>

Turning now to the conception of America as reflected in English literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we find in Defoe's novel *Colonel Jack* (1721) a strong appeal for humane treatment of the American negroes. Colonel Jack, in the course of his adventurous life, came to Virginia in colonial times and through his good behavior and his kind treatment of the negro slaves on a plantation, rose from the position of a

<sup>78</sup> Louvet de Couvray, *op. cit.*, I, 219 ff.

<sup>79</sup> Claude Dorat, *Mélanges de Poésies fugitives*.

slave to that of an overseer and became, finally, the owner of a prosperous plantation. In the eighteenth century many English poets and writers point to the superiority of primitive life on the virgin soil of America over corrupted civilization in Europe. Thus, George Berkeley, the noted Anglo-Saxon poet-bishop, as early as 1725, wrote "Verses on the prospect of planting arts and learning in America,"<sup>80</sup> where he introduces the Muse disgusted with an inglorious age and seeking a better place for her productions in distant lands in primitive life:

Westward the course of empire takes its way.

In 1732, in his "Essay on Man," Alexander Pope praised

. . . . the poor Indian whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind.<sup>81</sup>

In the *History of the Life and Surprising Adventures of Mr. Anderson* (1754) the life of the negroes and Indians in Maryland and Virginia in the second decade of the eighteenth century is pictured in a rather favorable light. Kind treatment of the negroes is advocated and the Indians appear as valiant warriors in the war against the French. An American love song pictures the beauties of nature in the country:

The gay Savannah cheers the eye,  
All blooming, rich with various sweets;  
Romantic views the woods supply,  
Each purling stream the prospect greets.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *Works of George Berkeley*, II, 127.—Berkeley, who in 1728 came from Ireland to the New World, has an unquenchable love for the green fields, the prosperous villages, and the happy men who dwell in America.

<sup>81</sup> Alex. Pope, *Works*, ed. by Elwin, II, 355 f.

<sup>82</sup> *History of the Life and Surprising Adventures of Mr. Anderson*, p. 66, (by an anonymous author).



Samuel Johnson's<sup>83</sup> *Idler* (no. 81; 1759) contains a very significant passage about the American Indians. A chief of this nation watches from a rock behind bushes the English army moving towards Quebec against the French. In a speech he reminds his followers of the past, when their ancestors were the absolute lords of the woods, meadows, and lakes; he complains about the avarice and rapacity of the strangers, who through bloodshed and deceit took possession of these lands, and he voices the hope that the present mutual slaughter of the Europeans will make the Indians once more the masters of their native country.

In the *Adventures of Emmera, or the Fair American* (1767), by an anonymous author, we read of a cultured English woman who, with her family, went to America in early colonial times because she was disgusted with European manners, which abounded in luxury and vice. She sought for more natural ideas and purer practice in a country just on the verge of civilization. After her arrival in the Northern British colonies she praises the "romantic scenes, where Nature reigns in her majestic wildness," and is glad "to pass now through life amidst simplicity and innocence, labour, health and cheerfulness,"<sup>84</sup> in contrast with the contamination of European refinements. Romantic descriptions of the picturesque beauties of the surroundings of Lake Erie are given. In one of the characters, Emmera, we meet a charming young American woman, "perfectly well made, easy, elegant and most astonishingly graceful."<sup>85</sup> Years ago, she also had come with her father from England to live in the solitary woods of the New World. There they had built their frame house with the help of friendly Indians and had enjoyed the pleasures of farm-life.

<sup>83</sup> Miss M. E. Cobb has discussed Johnson's attitude towards America in a Master's Essay: *Johnson and America*, 1919, Columbia University.

<sup>84</sup> *Adventures of Emmera*, etc., I, 7-8.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



In 1770, Goldsmith, in the "Deserted Village" bids farewell<sup>1</sup> to the muse of Poetry which is going to happier climes across the Atlantic, to teach men—

. . . that states of native strength possess'd,  
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd.<sup>86</sup>

Another English poet, William Cowper, wrote in 1784 "The Negro's Complaint":

Deem our nation brutes no longer  
Till some reason ye shall find  
Worthier of regard and stronger  
Than the colour of our kind.

Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings  
Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
Prove that you have human feelings  
Ere you proudly question ours!<sup>87</sup>

The contentment of a European in the society of the Cherokees is described in H. Mackenzie's novel *The Man of the World* (1773). Among the poems of Lisle Bowles, published at the end of the eighteenth century, we find a "Song of the American Indian," where the poet gives a romantic description of the "friendly savage" and of the American landscape.<sup>88</sup> A very interesting and favorable account of conditions and life in New York and Albany and of the Indians in New York State in the first half of the eighteenth century is given in Charlotte Lennox's novel *Euphemia* (1790). Furthermore, in the novel *The Old Manor House* (1793) by Charlotte Smith, the main character Orlando, an English officer, takes part in the Revolu-

<sup>86</sup> Goldsmith, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Dobson, p. 37.

<sup>87</sup> Cowper, *Works*, ed. by Southey, VI, 234-236.

<sup>88</sup> Bowles, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Gilfillan, I, 60.

tionary War and is kindly disposed towards the colonists. A young Indian, the Wolf-Hunter, is his faithful companion. Interesting descriptions of episodes of the war and of the country and its inhabitants point to the devastation which the war caused to the formerly flourishing regions.

Wordsworth too, in his poem "Ruth" (1799), refers to the exotic splendor of country life and vegetation in America. He introduces a young English soldier who, after the Revolutionary War, returned from Georgia to his native country and brought home "many tales of pleasure and of fear."<sup>89</sup> A bright picture of happy country life in Pennsylvania before the Revolutionary War is drawn in Thomas Campbell's epic poem "Gertrude of Wyoming" (1809). Certain of these English works were well known in Germany, at least Pope's "Essay on Man" and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"; they were doubtless among the sources of information about America from which the German writers of the following years gained their knowledge of the New World.

Professor Chauncey Brewster Tinker of Yale, in the first of his admirable essays on *Nature's Simple Plan* (1922), points to the radical thought that prevailed in England in the middle of the eighteenth century, and shows how in that period the general conviction took root that civilization in Europe was on the decline and that primitive man, in his savage or even animal state, was better off than the citizens of Europe. In regard to the history of the sentimentalized savage he says that the tendency to idealize the Indian was undoubtedly furthered by the missionaries who desired to put the Indian character in the best possible light.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Dowden, II, 112 ff. In his later works the poet presented America in a rather unfavorable light. Cf. "The Excursion" (1814), III.

<sup>90</sup> Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

It appears from our brief review of the conception of America in French and English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that primeval nature, simplicity of life, and the "friendly Indian" as contrasted with a morbid state of European culture were the characteristic features in the picture of the New World drawn in the works of the writers of both countries. To this conception as a literary source we shall have to return when we find similar views on America expressed by German poets and novelists in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Summing up the arguments presented in our introductory chapter we reach the following conclusions: The Revolutionary War awakened a keen interest in America all over Germany. Numerous publications in the field of scientific and descriptive literature both in books and periodicals as well as private letters from Germans in the Western Hemisphere sent to their relatives at home, constantly increased this interest. At the close of the century America is no longer a "terra incognita" to Germans; an abundance of literary material gives extensive information about conditions prevailing in the New World. The presentation of these conditions, however, is far from uniform. The prevailing conception of America is that of the land of liberty, young and active, promising a prosperous future. Great masses of the German people, discouraged in the midst of wretched political and economic conditions at home, magnify the good news from across the seas, and pin their last hope for mankind on America. On the other hand, more and more during the last decade of the century voices are heard which point conspicuously to defective and evil conditions in the Western Republic, especially to a crying lack of culture and ideals. German poets of those years preserve an attitude of supreme indifference towards America. In

French and English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there is drawn a bright picture of a happy life in the primeval nature of the New World untouched by European civilization.

This was the atmosphere in regard to America which the new generation of writers of German imaginative literature found at the beginning of the new century. We will now have to discuss what attitude these men took towards the Western World and how they presented their views in their works.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ERA OF ROMANTICISM

The great interest in America which had been awakened and constantly increased in Germany from 1775 to 1800, was further stimulated by a number of influences which began to make themselves felt with the opening of the new century.

In the first place, three distinguished and widely circulated publications, Cotta's *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Politisches Journal*, and the *Allgemeine geographische Ephemeriden* supplied their readers from 1800 on with abundant material concerning America, calling special attention to the triumphant progress which marked the political and economic life of the young republic in those years.

In the second place, an educated German, Dr. Justus Erich Bollmann,<sup>1</sup> closely affiliated with leaders in European public affairs, in 1796 made his home in Philadelphia, from where for a number of years he sent to his friends and relatives abroad detailed accounts of the political and economic conditions in the United States, picturing these in the most brilliant, although sometimes fantastic colors. "These letters," says Kapp, "at-

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Bollmann was born in the province of Hanover in 1769. He studied medicine and, through frequent travels to Paris and London, had intercourse with some distinguished foreigners of his time. His unsuccessful attempt to free Lafayette in Olmütz resulted in his own imprisonment. After his release he went to America in 1796 and took up his residence in Philadelphia, where he engaged in business with his brother. In 1815 he unofficially represented the United States at the Vienna Congress, where his reports on the prosperity of his country attracted universal attention. He died in 1822 on the island of Jamaica.

tract through their clarity and vividness as well as through their striking realism and absolute sincerity; they offer 'Stimmungsbilder' unsurpassed in our literary records of important historical events."<sup>2</sup>

A third factor in the tremendous increase of German interest in America at the beginning of our period was Alexander von Humboldt's scientific journeys through the new continent from 1799 to 1804. In Washington the German scientist enjoyed the hospitality of President Jefferson, with whom he subsequently, for several years, maintained a lively correspondence and the exchange of books. His visit in the United States, brief as it was, gave him a welcome opportunity to become acquainted with the political organization of the Republic, universally admired at that time, and to establish relations of cordial friendship with the prominent men in American public life. He returned to Europe impressed with the conditions which he found in the United States. His journeys aroused the keenest interest of students and scientists in the Old World. It was, therefore, but natural that, when in 1815 in Rome he met A. W. Schlegel and other men of letters, he should convey to this circle the fresh and deep impressions which the new continent had made upon him. "With great eloquence and vividness he pictured to his audience those countries which he had traversed and attracted the closest attention of his hearers."<sup>3</sup> In Berlin in 1808, when asked by King Frederick William III what he thought of the United States government, he answered: "Your Majesty, it is a government which nobody sees and nobody feels, and yet it is by far mightier than the government of Your Majesty."<sup>4</sup>

Humboldt's reports of the world beyond the seas appealed,

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Kapp, *J. E. Bollmann. Ein Lebensbild aus zwei Weltteilen*, Einleitung.

<sup>3</sup> K. Bruhns, *Alexander von Humboldt*, I, 394 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Rattermann, *Deutsch-Amerik. Magazin*, p. 231.

of course, chiefly to men of science, although their magic was felt as well by all cultivated circles. At the same time, within the sphere of imaginative literature, another famous European traveler in America aroused the keenest interest. In the Spring of 1791 François René de Chateaubriand embarked in France for the New World. Although Chinard doubts the genuineness of the report,<sup>5</sup> the traveler alleges that he journeyed within five months from Baltimore to Niagara Falls and then turned to the South and visited Louisiana and Florida. On this journey his sensitive imagination was struck by the majesty and beauty of American landscapes and by the primitive character of the sons of the wilderness. He registered his impressions and experiences at first in his novel *Atala* (1801) and in the following year in *René*. *Les Natchez*, a concluding chapter of *René*, appeared in 1825. "It was a romance of the plains and mysterious forests of North America, with a strong aroma of the untilled soil from which it sprang; it glowed with foreign coloring, and with the fiercer glow of consuming passion."<sup>6</sup> In 1827 Chateaubriand published his *Voyage en Amérique*.

The work of the great French novelist soon caused a real sensation throughout Europe's literary circles; they aroused an intense interest in Germany and influenced the conception of nature in America in the works of German poets through the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> It was mainly due to this writer and his novels that the old conception of America as the land of liberty was now supplemented by the conception of America as the country of primeval forests and mighty streams where men, wearied of the morbid culture of the Old World,

<sup>5</sup> G. Chinard, *L'exotisme américain dans l'œuvre de Chateaubriand*.

<sup>6</sup> G. Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, I, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Victor Fleury, "Les sources de Freiligrath," in the *Revue Germanique*, May 1922, p. 109.—Paul Schultz, *Die Schilderung exotischer Natur im deutschen Roman mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Charles Sealsfields*, pp. 42-43.

could regain physical strength and mental vitality. While Humboldt's more scientific descriptions through their restrained eloquence appealed chiefly to the intellect of the German readers, the exotic novels of the successor of Rousseau and Bernardin de St. Pierre captivated their imagination.

These various intellectual and literary forces, however, which tended to increase the interest in America, found but little response within the sphere of German imaginative literature in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

To be sure, America appears here and there in literary works of these decades, though usually with some "Tendenz" rather than as an integral element of the narrative or as the background for the action. Thus Seume, writing his memoirs after his journey to the New World (1782-1783), seeks in the rehearsal of his experiences as a conscript soldier in America during the Revolutionary War to revive ideals of the age of humanitarianism. He sums up his experiences with the American savages in these words: "I have never heard that they did any harm to one of us."<sup>8</sup> Again, he praises the Canadian, untouched yet by the "surface civility of the Old World" (Europens übertünchte Höflichkeit) and extols the hospitality of the "friendly Huron" in his "Abschied von Münchhausen."

Similarly, in a fruitless attempt to imitate the classic-romantic art of Schiller with its fondness for stage-effect, more than one writer of the first quarter of the new century undertook to dramatize episodes relating to the history of the New World. One of these, August Klingemann, in 1808, extolled the adventurous deeds of Columbus, Ferdinand Cortez, and Pizarro in a trilogy, presenting the history of the discovery and conquest of Mexico. Furthermore, Joseph Freiherr von Auffenberg paid a tribute to the struggle for the inviolable rights of humanity, for liberty in every form, in his romantic tragedy *Die Flibustier*

<sup>8</sup> J. G. Seume, *Mein Leben*, I, 72.



*oder die Eroberung von Panama*, published in 1819, which, although it seems never to have been staged, won a decided success on the book-market. In addition, C. F. van der Velde, one of the most widely read and most popular novelists of his time, drew a brilliant historico-romantic picture of the first quarter of the sixteenth century in Spanish America in his novel *Die Eroberung von Mexico* (1825).<sup>9</sup>

These works of popular imaginative literature, however, have hardly any artistic value; besides, they refer only to the historical past of the New World. Contemporary America, the character, history, and the conditions representative of the United States at the time of its mighty expansion and development, were hardly touched by the main currents of German literature up to the twenties of the nineteenth century. It is, indeed, surprising that in a period when, as Henrik Steffens says, the popular belief in the "Fall of Europe and the Rise of America" was so predominant among the masses in Germany,<sup>10</sup> this conception was so little represented in the works of Germany's greater poets. Only now and then, a lonely voice is heard on this theme. Such a one speaks in a poem "Europa"<sup>11</sup> published in Wieland's *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur* (January 1804), where the author endeavors to cheer his despondent countrymen by pointing to the land of freedom across the seas:

Ha, seid getrost: es öffnet seine Pfade  
Entschlossenen Männern noch das Meer;  
Im ew'gen Wald, am glücklichsten Gestade  
Irrt noch der Wilde nackt umher;

<sup>9</sup> According to Breffka, *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*, p. 27, the *Berliner Figaro* noted as early as January 2, 1839, "dass Columbus bis jetzt in 36 grösse-  
ren Gedichten dramatischer wie epischer Art angesungen worden ist." The  
drama *Der Amerikaner* (1798) by W. Vogel (1772-1843), as Breffka states  
(p. 9), is preserved only in a manuscript, and is inaccessible.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. H. Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, I, 236.

<sup>11</sup> The author's name is given as Hinsberg.

Und überall, gepflegt von deutschen Händen  
 Erteilt die Erd' aus ihrem Schoss  
 Mit Dankbarkeit die mütterlichen Spenden,  
 Und Segen ist des Fleisses Loos.  
 Noch immer grünt des mut'gen Volkes Ehre,  
 Das einst das unterjochte Land  
 Der Väter floh, und über'm weiten Meere  
 Ein freies Phocis wiederfand.  
 Entstand nicht einst aus Troja's fernen Trümmern  
 Die Königin der Städte Rom?  
 War nicht einst Wald, wo jetzt Paläste schimmern,  
 Am Delaware und Hudsonstrom?

It is significant and important to note that in this poem occurs what seems to be the earliest poetic reference to the glorious part which German settlers played in the cultural development of the American Republic after its foundation.

Aside from this epic, we know of no poem, novel, or drama of importance in the first decade of the new century that deals with the United States. In order to understand this reserved attitude of the German poets towards America, we must now trace the main current within German literature in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

In 1797, the brothers Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel severed their connections with German classicism and inaugurated a new literary movement. "Romanticism was the striking note that rang in the new century."<sup>12</sup> It was predominant in German literature from 1800 to 1830, effecting, to be sure, various expressions of literature. It will be necessary for the discussion of our subject to trace, first, briefly the fundamental general character of this literary current, especially in regard to America, and to present, then, the views of the various Romanticists in particular.

The Romantic conception of life was not based on fixed

<sup>12</sup> H. Mielke, *Der deutsche Roman* (1912), p. 65.

rules or principles; it was rather a reflection of the unsatisfactory intellectual and cultural conditions of the time. It implied, furthermore, a revival of the heroic past and a deep longing for a new and better future. In the spirit of Romanticism the German mind with its yearning for absolute intellectual liberty and untrammelled development of individuality seemed to come at last to its own. Oppressed by the wretched conditions of their time, and disgusted with the rational spirit of the "Aufklärung", the Romanticists turned to lofty ideals represented in the heroic splendor of the Middle Ages. In poetry and history they glorified the "happy days gone by." Modern life in all its aspects and expressions seemed to them prosaic. Carried away by their enthusiasm for the poetic art, they wanted man's whole life to be inspired by the genius of poetry. Viewed from such lofty flights, America, intent, at that time, on material interests and the political problems of the day, seemed to these poets unbearably dull and commonplace.

In its first period (1800 to 1810), Romanticism, limited to the sphere of intellect and art, was absolutely unpolitical.<sup>13</sup> It was a sworn enemy of revolution and cultivated "Kunst-dichtung." In spite of all their efforts to spread their gospel among the masses by lectures and periodicals, the Romanticists of those years professed an aversion to a representative popular government.<sup>14</sup>

Not only to political questions, but also to the historical facts and events of their time were the writers of Romanticism indifferent. It was their historical axiom that a constitution could be conceived only as the expression of a highly developed

<sup>13</sup> Cf. G. Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, II, 242.—Ric. Huch, *Ausbreitung u. Verfall der Romantik* (1920), p. 296 ff.—O. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, (1918), I, 105.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Fr. Schlegel, *Philosoph. Vorlesungen* (1804-1806), IV, 331, 379. Novalis, *Fragmente* (in *Schriften*, II, 168).

sense of justice, sanctioned by long tradition.<sup>15</sup> Their interest in history was influenced by aesthetic reflections; it was exclusively in this sense that they were cosmopolitan. They were attracted by countries like Italy and the Orient, where mankind had spent the joyous days of its childhood and youth, and where men's thirst for sensuous pleasures was easily satisfied. The Western continent, however, representing the land of universal liberty in contrast with the Old World, ruled by strict order and regularity, was looked upon by these poets as "a symbol for prose and arbitrary construction and lacking in historical background" (Sinnbild der Nüchternheit, der geschichtslosen, willkürlichen Konstruktion).<sup>16</sup>

But in spite of this fundamental indifference to America as a country without history, culture, and ideals, the Romanticists could not entirely escape from the deep impression made everywhere by frequent reports, from across the seas, of the growing prosperity of the United States. A mighty, though nebulous and aimless longing for peace and happiness directed their eyes to the virgin soil and the immense forests of the New World. Fleeing from the misery of their time, some, as Friedrich Schlegel, Clemens Brentano, Zacharias Werner, took refuge in the consolations of the Church, while others, like Follen and Chamisso, turned their eyes to America.

All these sentiments in regard to the New World find expression in the works of the Romantic writers which we shall now proceed to discuss in detail.

An investigation of the Romantic periodicals published from 1798 to 1823 shows clearly the attitude of the Romanticists towards America during that period. There are about twenty-five periodicals which may be regarded as belonging to the Romantic movement, and to these hundreds of writers con-

<sup>15</sup> Julian Schmidt, *Die deutsche Literatur seit Lessings Tode*, II, 328.

<sup>16</sup> Ric. Huch, *Ausbreitung u. Verfall etc.*, p. 32.



tributed. Out of all of these numbers only one periodical and one Romantic writer refers to America, namely, Friedrich Schlegel in his *Concordia* (1820-1823). In the periodicals of the earlier Romantic period, of which the *Athenäum* (1798-1800) and *Europa* (1803-1805) are representative, no mention at all is made of America. From these facts it becomes evident how indifferent the Romantic authors in the first two decades of the nineteenth century were to the Western Republic.<sup>17</sup>

As a general thing, these writers, Wackenroder, August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Tieck, Achim von Arnim, Eichendorff, and others, strongly influenced by their national feeling, considered it their prime mission in this dark period of the Fatherland's afflictions to enliven and strengthen in their countrymen's hearts the love of true German ideals. Why should they care about America? Germany's future was at stake and was to be saved. To quote one of these poets:

Glaub' an unsres Volkes Weise,  
An ein heimisch Vaterland,  
Wo im schlichten, alten Kreise  
Jeder still beharrt, und weise  
Fremde Lüst' und Sitten bannt.<sup>18</sup>

Ludwig Tieck shows in his *Phantásus* (1811), in a conversation between two friends, how his heart beats with joy when he wanders through the streets of Nuremberg where the spirits of Dürer and Sachs greet him in many master-works of art. Contrasted with Nuremberg, how dull appears to him the city of Fürth with its busy life, its noise and modern industries, "representing the spirit of North America."<sup>19</sup> He holds America responsible for some of the evils of his time, among which he

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Walzel und Houben, *Die romantischen Zeitschriften*.

<sup>18</sup> *Aug Wilh. Schlegels Sämtliche Werke*, I, 265.

<sup>19</sup> L. Tieck, *Phantásus*, I, 8.

classes the smoking of tobacco. He could be angry even at "the much-praised compass that led us to America in order to bring this awful weed over to us with so many other ills."<sup>20</sup>

It is from his standpoint as a German nationalist that Friedrich Schlegel in his later years raises his voice against an exaggerated estimate of America in German public opinion. The strong advocate of cosmopolitanism and of the republican form of government had, since the years of the *Athenäum* and *Europa*, turned more and more towards German nationalism.<sup>21</sup> In a treatise "Signatur des Zeitalters," published in the periodical *Concordia*<sup>22</sup> (1820), Schlegel points out that the German public has been aroused by the frequent favorable reports on America's growing prosperity. "North-American principles and events," he writes, "presented themselves dimly to an aging Europe through the inspiring glamor of distance (in der majestätischen Beleuchtung einer weiten Ferne) and impressed the mind with the enchanting hope (Hoffnungszauber) that across the seas a New World was arising with youthful vigor."<sup>23</sup> There are some, the author goes on to say, who fear that the Day of Judgment has come for Europe, and there are others who believe that civilization, just as it once passed from Asia to Europe, will now make its home in America. Such apprehensions, however, Schlegel thinks unfounded. In the first place, the increase in the population of America is, according to his opinion, still insignificant. Secondly, in regard to culture and morals, America is hardly more than a receptacle into which the little mother-country Europe has thrown its human garbage. Finally, the author claims that it would take several generations

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> O. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 105.

<sup>22</sup> *Concordia, eine Zeischrift*, edited by Fr. Schlegel in six issues (I-V in 1820, VI in 1823).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 25.

for young America to drive the Old World into the background and deprive her of her supremacy.<sup>24</sup> In the course of his argument Schlegel voices his opinion that America still bears the marks of her origin as a British colony.<sup>25</sup> Without prejudice and passion the author criticizes the slavery question in the United States. Those States, he thinks, which are still clinging to the custom of human slavery can hardly be called Christian States, and, certainly, they cannot be considered models of moral perfection. On the other hand, he holds, it is dangerous to remove over night a deep-rooted evil, as such a procedure would doubtless result in a fatal reaction.<sup>26</sup> How completely the political views of Schlegel's earlier years have changed, the writer reveals in a passage in his *Vorlesungen über Philosophie der Geschichte* (1828), where he calls the revolutionary tendencies of his time a political epidemic of the age, and holds America responsible for the existence of these harmful forces in Europe: "The real source of these destructive principles, the revolutionary training-school for France and the rest of Europe, was North America."<sup>27</sup>

The same spirit of antipathy to America prevails in an article of Adam Müller, published in the *Concordia*. The noted journalist discusses in this treatise the different economic theories of his time and demands that political science should be presented on a theological basis and not merely as a result of man's reasoning and rational reflections. He voices his conviction that it was the culture of centuries which made Europe great and hopes that the wretched commercial spirit of the age will

<sup>24</sup> *Concordia*, I, 29.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 362-63.

<sup>27</sup> *Fr. Schlegels Sämtliche Werke*, v. XIV, *Vorlesungen über Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 226.

flee across the Atlantic to a country where congenial laws, customs, and political institutions are awaiting it.<sup>28</sup>

The first work of Romantic imaginative literature in which America appears is Dorothea Schlegel's *Florentin* (1801). Florentin, the main character of the novel, is wandering as a Romantic idler through a part of Europe, until a presentiment begins to dawn in him that he is predestined for something better than a tramp. Dissatisfied with the world and longing for a life of adventure, he conceives the idea of entering the Republican army in America, to fight for liberty and, thus, forget himself in absorbing activity.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the spectacle of a state working out its own problems interests him; over there he would like to see being accomplished by the masses what he himself had had in mind since the days of his childhood.<sup>30</sup> There, at least, he may find, he thinks, peace and happiness for his soul.

Florentin, we see, has a double nature. With his purposelessness he is a Romantic figure and, with his thirst for adventures, a revolutionary character of Storm and Stress. Dorothea Schlegel introduces in him her former suitor, Eduard d'Alton, who actually pursued the same fantastic dreams as Florentin. He emigrated to the New World in order to find peace among the aborigines.<sup>31</sup>

There is really nothing typically Romantic in the picture of America in this novel. It is simply the America of Storm and Stress, the land where the restless European adventurer may find a new field for his interests and activities. An American background is entirely missing.

<sup>28</sup> *Concordia*, III, 141.

<sup>29</sup> Dorothea Schlegel, *Florentin*, p. 346.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. E. Donner, *Der Einfluss Wilhelm Meisters auf den Roman der Romantiker*, p. 109 (Caroline an A. W. Schlegel, 6. Juli 1801: "Eduard ist der Liebhaber. den Mad. V(eit) vor einigen Jahren hatte, das Urbild von Florentin.")



A later work, however, does bring us into a sphere of distinctly Romantic ideas. In his *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (1815) Joseph von Eichendorff sketches the critical time in Germany preceding the War of Liberation. In sharp outlines he presents the different types of Romantic characters of that period, their deep concern over the Fatherland's afflictions and their unfaltering belief in a new and better future. In their grave anxiety, worried about the weakness of the present generation, they turn away from it. While Friedrich, one of the main characters of the novel, intends to enter a monastery in order to devote his life to noble self-denial, Faber is resolved to face and fight out bravely the struggle in the open. Leontin, however, turns his eyes towards the New World. To its primitive nature and the untouched green of its forests he wants to take the sweet memories of the glorious past as well as the grief over the dark present; there he will wait and prepare himself worthily for a better and nobler future. "In the primeval forests of America," he says, "I shall strengthen my heart and eyes and preserve as a sacred treasure the honor and the memory of Germany's splendor in the past, together with the intense sorrow over our present afflictions, in order that a new and brighter future, which we all hope for, may find me worthy, awake, and ready."<sup>32</sup> At the conclusion of the novel we see Leontin's boat with its white sail disappearing on the distant horizon, with the sun splendidly rising.

*Ahnung und Gegenwart* is, thus, the first representative Romantic novel in German literature which presents the Romantic conception that America's primitive nature and virgin soil offer a refuge for the mind wearied of Europe and its ills, and a source of new inspiration and strength. We may assume that Eichendorff was influenced by Chateaubriand and his predecessors, who, as we have seen, brought just this con-

<sup>32</sup> J. v. Eichendorffs *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Kosch u. Sauer, III, 327.

ception clearly and effectively to the foreground in their works. The author, to be sure, takes no personal interest in the New World; his own views are rather presented by the characters of Friedrich and Faber, who are to stay in the Fatherland. The writer takes a similar attitude in his novel *Der Dichter und seine Gesellen* (1834), where Victor voices the poet's own courageous patriotism when he says: "I'll rather enter the old, sultry, and dusty arena of Europe."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Eichendorff was throughout his life a strong exponent of German nationalism. In two poems of his later years he heaps ridicule on the fever of his countrymen for emigration. In the first, "Der Auswanderer" (1850), he derides the deceptive hopes entertained by those who were looking across the seas and were calling:

. . . . . Vivat Amerika,  
Mit den vereinigten Provinzen,  
Wo die Einwohner alle Prinzen  
Und alle Berge in Gold verhext,  
Wo die Cigarre und der Pfeffer wächst.<sup>34</sup>

In the second poem Eichendorff humorously describes the first impressions which the emigrants gain from the New World on their arrival in New York and at their meeting with "Yankees" and German-Americans on the Hudson River boat that is going to take them further into the United States. The poem ends with this stanza:

Jetzt erst erkannt' ich bei dem Lärm  
Verwundert manch' Bekannten  
Von Deutschland her in dem Geschwärm,  
Es waren Komödianten,  
Und der Direktor tät alsbald

<sup>33</sup> *Eichendorffs Sämtliche poetische Werke* (Leipzig, 1883), II, 234.

<sup>34</sup> *Eichendorffs Sämtliche poetische Werke* (Leipzig, 1883), I, 13.

Als Staberl mich engagieren,  
 Um bei den Yankees im Urwald  
 Die Bildung einzuführen.<sup>35</sup>

The first signs of a more friendly attitude towards America in Romantic literature appear in the *Vaterländisches Museum*. This publication, a patriotic historico-political magazine, founded by Friedrich Perthes in Hamburg in 1810, but discontinued in 1811 when the French entered the city, boasted among its contributors a number of more or less important writers. In a series of articles, "Politische Fastenpredigten," published in the first issue of the *Museum*, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter discusses the chaotic conditions of contemporary Germany. With a true devotion to the Fatherland the great master of sentiment and humor combines a world-wide interest in the universe. He does not share the pessimistic views of many of his countrymen who fear a decline of the sciences. He lights for them the torch of hope, and his hope is America. Even if the worst should happen, if an icy winter-frost should cover the fields of German learning, then the sun will shine over another hemisphere. "From America the sun will illuminate and give life to (beleuchten und befruchten) a new Germany, and bring back seed and springtime to Old Germany." "In any case," the writer says, "America is a mysterious land; even its geographical features are characteristic. In that country, although situated in the same degree of latitude with us, the barometer always stands higher. Its trees and flowers, growing in much greater profusion than here, are symbols of the high standard of liberty which prevails in America."<sup>36</sup>

In a similar way, in the same periodical Dr. Heinrich Julius,

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> *Vaterländisches Museum*, 1810, pp. 35-36.

of Hamburg,<sup>37</sup> noted later as a philanthropist, traveler, and writer on penal institutions in America, prepares the way for a better understanding between the two countries. He pleads for a mutual friendship between the Old World and the New World, paying high tribute to the Republic as a refuge for the oppressed and despondent minds in Europe, and pointing to the prosperous future toward which the United States is advancing.<sup>38</sup>

The War of Liberation was a momentous event in the political history of the German people. It opened a new chapter in the historical development of the German mind, and necessarily brought America into a new angle of vision. Before we turn in our discussion to this new period, it may be well to summarize the details which have just been passed in review.

The keen interest in America which Germany had manifested in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, although stimulated by new and powerful influences in the succeeding years, did not find a loud echo in the hearts of the German poets from 1800 to 1815. Overwhelmed by the great calamity which had befallen the Fatherland, almost all of these writers lost their interest in contemporary history, except in so far as it affected their own land; and showed indifference when the splendid development of the Western Republic was called to their attention. In the imaginative literature of this period the New World has hardly any place. It is only in very few works that the Romantic longing turns to America. In her primitive

<sup>37</sup> Nic. Heinr. Julius (1783-1862), born in Altona, studied medicine at the universities of Heidelberg and Würzburg. After 1809, physician in Hamburg. He manifested his patriotism during the War of Liberation. In 1817, he published his *Bibliotheca Germano-glottica*. He took the keenest interest in the reform of penal institutions. In 1834-1836 he visited America and published in 1839 two volumes of *Nordamerikas sittliche Zustände*. He continued his philanthropic work from 1840 to 1849 in the service of the Prussian government in Berlin, and from 1849 to 1862 in Hamburg.

<sup>38</sup> *Vaterländisches Museum*, 1810, pp. 297-298.



nature it finds a fountain of youth, in her great enterprises a field for adventurers. Hopeful signs of a better appreciation of America, however, now begin to appear. From Hamburg liberal-minded writers point across the seas to the Western continent, whence new life may yet come to the devastated fields of European civilization.<sup>39</sup>

This strange indifference to America's tremendous development which the aristocratic and intellectual classes in Germany, in contrast to the masses, manifested from 1800 to 1815, is further evidenced by a report of Varnhagen von Ense in his *Denkwürdigkeiten des eigenen Lebens* (1837-1859). In the third volume of these memoirs the noted German diplomat and biographer draws a magnificent sketch of the Vienna Congress in 1815, presenting its distinguished characters and memorable events in portraits and pictures of vivid color. He does not forget to mention one brilliant gathering to which the Austrian diplomat Friedrich von Gentz invited the leading statesmen of Europe with their ladies. The German-American Justus Bollmann, who was also present, availed himself of the opportunity to give a detailed and most favorable account of the great prosperity which marked the political and economic life of the United States at that time. With breathless silence, Varnhagen relates, the distinguished audience listened to this report. "The whole land of America had become almost estranged to us through the long war on the seas, and still more estranged the conception of such a republic, the development of which was a fabulous and almost terrifying illustration of the fact that plain citizens are capable of building a great and mighty commonwealth which we Europeans were accustomed to derive only

<sup>39</sup> That not all the poets of the earlier period of Romanticism were restricted to the Fatherland in their interests, is shown by Heinr. v. Kleist's story *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo* (1811). As this story, however, does not refer to the United States, it has been left out of our consideration.

from the nobility and kings."<sup>40</sup> To this account Varnhagen adds that through the naïve questions of a diplomat present, whose inexhaustible curiosity could not be satisfied, the discussion gradually turned to a complete course on republican principles and models, illustrated by striking examples, an event that one could have least of all expected at a congress of monarchs.

Of the greatest influence upon the development of Romantic imaginative literature was the appearance of Walter Scott's works, which came into vogue in Germany in the middle of the twenties. Attracted by the new paths which the great English novelist had opened in literature, German writers endeavored in their works to leave the narrow sphere of nationalism and romantic sentimentalism, and to enter the wider fields of universal history and nature. Thus a new era began also for the presentation of America in German literature.

One of the first and noblest representatives of this younger period of German Romanticism was Adelbert von Chamisso. The highly gifted poet deserves our special attention from the fact that he was the first German Romanticist who visited America and reflected the deep impressions which he received on the soil of the Western World both in noble prose and in beautiful poetry. From 1815 to 1818 he accompanied as a scientist Captain Otto von Kotzebue, the commander of the Russian brig "Rurik," on a scientific journey around the world, and published the account of his experiences in 1821 in his *Reise um die Welt mit der Romanzoffischen Entdeckungs-Expedition in den Jahren 1815-1818 auf der Brig "Rurik."* This work, couched in masterly classical prose, ranks worthily beside Alexander von Humboldt's works in the travel literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. In the record of details concerning the mode of life of the foreign peoples visited, we find a power of

<sup>40</sup> Varnhagen von Ense, *op. cit.*, III, 315.

appreciation and an art of philosophical interpretation unequalled by other descriptions of travel in America.

What fascinates us most, indeed, in Chamisso's accounts is the manner of presentation. A multitude of interests grips the writer and radiates in every direction. The author confessed later (1834) to his publishers<sup>41</sup> that he had wanted to write a description of travel entirely different from the usual form of this literature, a work in which the poet and thinker would be everywhere felt, and which would be exclusively human and sketched as a chapter of his life. Indeed, this strong personal note is heard in the introduction to his work, where the writer relates how glad he was when his request to join the expedition was granted. His fondest hopes were now to be realized, the world lay open to him and he could wrest her secrets from beloved nature.

On August 12, 1815, Chamisso embarked in Copenhagen on board the "Rurik." Proceeding by Cape Horn, the navigators made first for Kamchatka. From there, turning to the northwest coast of America, they arrived in the harbor of San Francisco on the second of October 1816. For three weeks they explored the interior of California. The account of the German writer contains a description that is scientific, but highly interesting also to the lay reader, of the flora, fauna, and the minerals of the country. In addition, he pictures the aborigines of the coast and tells us that they are by far inferior to the Indians in the interior of America. For years they have been forgotten or oppressed by Mexico, their mother-country. "A little freedom," the poet states, "would make California the granary and market of the northern coast of these seas and of their ships." "But California has neither industry nor commerce nor navigation,—a deserted and unpeopled country."<sup>42</sup> Further-

<sup>41</sup> Sydow: *Chamissos Werke*, I, Einl., p. cvii.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 28.

more, the Franciscan missionaries exploit these Indians. They consider them savages unworthy of attention, and have no regard for their history, customs, religion, or language. Accordingly, those Indians who have been converted feel like slaves, and are eager to regain their liberty. The result of these wretched conditions is that whole tribes have become extinct.

In later years Chamisso strikingly voiced the feelings and hardships of these primitive peoples in his poems. Here the disciple of Rousseau points out how much the Europeans have sinned against the aborigines, because they did not understand their ways. In the poem "Rede des alten Kriegers Bunte-Schlange im Rate der Creek-Indianer" (1829) the poet introduces into the council of the Indians President Jefferson's commissary, who delivers to them the request of the American government that they leave the lands on the Mississippi immediately. In his reply Bunte-Schlange, an old man of a hundred years, reminds the messenger how many benefits the white people have derived from the Indians, and how poorly the latter have been rewarded. He concluded his address with these words:

Ihr Brüder, unser grosser Vater klagt,  
Dass unsere schlechten Menschen ihn betrübt,  
Mit Mord an einen Weissen sich gewagt;—  
Wo sind die roten Kinder, die er liebt?  
So zahlreich, wie im Walde sonst das Laub,  
Wie kommt's, dass ihre Zahl wie Laub zerstiebt?  
Ach! seinen weissen Kriegern sind zum Raub  
Gar viele worden, viele sind erschlagen.  
Und viele trat sein Fuss selbst in den Staub.  
Ich habe, Brüder, weiter nichts zu sagen.<sup>43</sup>

The poem "Das Mordtal" (1830) also depicts the hatred that exists between the white and red men. The poet shows us the Indians as a sensitive people, not unsusceptible to culture.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 60.



Furthermore, the scenery of the American Urwald is pictured in this poem in all its romantic splendor:

Leuchtkäfer schwirren durch des Laubes Zelt,  
Da rings die Landschaft tief in Nacht versunken.<sup>44</sup>

Another poem, "Lafayette in Amerika," a translation of Béranger's French original, refers to the enthusiastic reception which Lafayette received when he toured America in 1825. The poet pays high tribute to the gallant Frenchman, the great friend of the American people in the critical hour of the struggle for independence:

Wohl floss des Blutes viel, wir unterlagen,  
Doch Lafayette erschien, wies auf sein Land;  
Washington führte, siegreich ward geschlagen,  
Und siehe, Albions Panier verschwand.<sup>45</sup>

Chamisso, as a disciple of Rousseau, saw his political ideal in a republican form of government.<sup>46</sup> His contempt of European civilization frequently made him turn his eyes toward the Western Hemisphere. As early as 1820 he conceived the idea of going to America with his friend Lafoye. On June 25, 1825 he wrote to him: "Emigration to America was nearer to my mind than a return to Paris."<sup>47</sup> Similarly, he writes to the same friend on August 14, 1825, that it often seemed to him as if Europe were on the verge of moral collapse and, although he had a family, he often looked across the seas to young America.<sup>48</sup>

In reviewing Chamisso's scientific and poetical presentation of America, it seems almost certain that the German Roman-

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 136.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, I, Einl. p. LXXXVIII.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. CXX.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. CXXI.

ticist was influenced by Alexander von Humboldt as well as by Chateaubriand. This assumption gains strength through the fact that he, whose mother-tongue was French, had easy and early access to the works of both writers. Moreover, it is not unlikely that the poet was familiar with Duden's description of his travels in America, which appeared in 1829. Indeed, the lines in his poem "Das Mordtal," above mentioned, remind us of that passage in Duden's work which later also inspired Lenau: "Am Fusse der Berge empfangen uns die Wälder, und hier waren wir denn alsbald von Myriaden fliegender Leuchtkäfer umglänzt, die das Licht des nächtlichen Himmels ganz entbehrlich machten."<sup>49</sup>

Before Chamisso, a talented young woman, Elisabeth Kulmann, had drawn brilliant pictures of American nature. She was born in 1808 in St. Petersburg. Her mother was a German, her father a Russian officer, the grandson of a family that emigrated from Alsace to Russia. After having mastered a considerable number of ancient and modern languages, the precocious girl began to write verse both in Russian and in German. Johann Heinrich Voss, Jean Paul, and Goethe read her poems and declared her talent to be unusual. But Goethe's prophecy that she would some day gain an honorable place in literature came to nothing when, at the early age of seventeen, she died in St. Petersburg, in 1825.<sup>50</sup> The young poetess, gifted with a vivid imagination, enriched German imaginative literature with descriptions of exotic nature which are remarkable for their clearness and simplicity. She pictures the Mississippi majestically setting forth upon its course toward the South, resolved to see the vast world with all its beauties. One tributary stream after the other joins the mighty Father of Waters until they all together jubilantly greet him:

<sup>49</sup> G. Duden, *Bericht über eine Reise* etc., p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Künste u. Wissenschaften*, II, no. 40.

Der Wälder kühle Schatten,  
 Der nahen Indier Spur,  
 Unabsehbare Wiesen,  
 Lousianas Götterflur,—  
 Nichts, nichts, o Mutter, konnte  
 Verzögern unsern Lauf.  
 So suchten mit entflammtem  
 Verlangen wir dich auf.<sup>51</sup>

With glowing colors the Urwald of America is described, the "remnant of primitive nature." Around its trunks pretty lianas and blossoming vines twine, and climb, "like manifold snakes," to the top. The wonderful forest with its pillared halls and majestic castles is inhabited by the purple wood-pecker, the fiery-red bull finch, the parrot, Virginia's little pigeon, the black squirrel, and the "jewel-colibri." Over the leafy roof the palm-tree looms high into the air like a watch-tower.

Although these poems, as "Der Mississippi Strom," "Der Urwald," "Der Bogota Fall in Amerika," may lack technical perfection, their value lies in the fact that with them America's nature, reflected in a vivid imagination, entered the sphere of German poetry. The poetess undoubtedly derived her ideas of American nature from her comprehensive knowledge of French and English literature.

Perhaps no other Romantic writer in Germany manifested throughout his life a keener interest in the historical and political development of the United States than Henrik Steffens, the noted scientist, philosopher, and poet. On the rocky coast of his homeland, in Norway, where he spent the years of his childhood, the love of nature and an interest in foreign peoples was early implanted in his young mind. From this time on, the passionate desire to widen his mental horizon through the study of nature and, indeed, of the universe, became the char-

<sup>51</sup> *Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker*, vol. 18, p. 700.

acteristic of his life. Steffens relates in his memoirs how in Helsingör, when a boy, he first heard the news of the American war; and how his father invited his friends and neighbors to celebrate the victory of the colonies. Soon he himself comprehended the importance of the struggle and conceived a deep sympathy for this people that fought so bravely for its liberty.<sup>52</sup> At the university of Copenhagen the young student presented in enthusiastic language in a prize-essay his view that as the latest heir of Greek, Roman, and modern European civilization, there would now arise in America a new and perfect humanity, embracing all the preceding stages of culture, a conception, he states, which had the support of public opinion at that time.<sup>53</sup>

In 1796 Steffens took up his residence in Germany. He lectured as a professor of natural philosophy and physics at the universities of Kiel and Halle and at the Physikalisches Institut in Breslau. After the War of Liberation, in which he took an active part, he returned to Breslau and became an ardent student of politics. As such he published in 1817 a political treatise *Die gegenwärtige Zeit und wie sie geworden*, in which he devoted a special chapter to the discussion of contemporary America. While the author comments very favorably on the historical and economic development of the Republic, he views her future with the greatest apprehension. "What has become of America that for almost forty years maintained her liberty?" he asks. In his answer he states that America clearly exemplifies the fact that even the most splendid and liberal constitution cannot bring a state into prominence. America, he says, is like a powerful statue, without life, without a heart, a sad monument of a time which, although rich in brute force, was poor in high ideals.<sup>54</sup> To prove his arguments,

<sup>52</sup> H. Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, I, 77 ff.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 236.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 330 f.



Steffens points to the gloomy aspects which religion presents in the United States and to the low standard of the arts and sciences, conditions which he finds natural in a nation that has no spiritual principles. "America serves as a warning for the foolish view prevailing also in Europe that it is the chief duty of a state to provide for the physical needs of its citizens." Finally, the writer admits the possibility that America is a land where the various popular forces have free play, and that prosperous conditions will further develop. He repudiates, however, the view that in a republic which has no historically developed national traditions, a general program for prosperity, applicable to all nations, can be produced.

Steffens is, thus, the first Romantic writer in Germany who discusses at length the political importance of the United States. That in spite of all his sympathies with the liberal principles and favorable progress of the Republic he doubts the vitality of her institutions and national life, cannot surprise us, for he judges from the limited standpoint of the cultured European of his time. Blinded by prejudice, these privileged classes looked down with a sort of haughty superiority upon the beginnings of cultural life in America.

Steffens treats America not only in a political treatise. He refers to the Republic's glorious past in his novel *Die Familien Walseth und Leith* (1826-27). The author, influenced by Walter Scott's captivating art, pictures in this novel the grandiose natural scenery of the Scandinavian countries. In the third part of the work, the main character, Leith, comes to Gothenburg, where he finds an American vessel. The sight of this stirs his innermost feelings. In America, we learn, the war for liberty and independence had begun. All Europe viewed this war as an event of the greatest importance in its possible consequences. The Americans wanted to enlist trained European soldiers, and when the sea-captain noticed the enthusiasm of the traveler

for liberty, his knowledge and entirely independent situation in life, he did everything in his power to strengthen the first impulse of the young man. But there was no need for persuasion. Leith took his present favorable situation as a hint from Providence to participate in the great war, and before they had reached Norway, he had decided to follow the American captain to Boston.<sup>55</sup>

It is an obvious defect of the novel that its references to America stop here, nor do we even learn whether Leith carried out his decision or anything about the Revolutionary War. However, the few allusions to this great event in American history suffice to demonstrate the keen interest which Steffens himself took in the struggle of the colonies from the days of his childhood.

A very peculiar reference to America appears in what seems to be a satire on the haughty attitude of European culture toward the New World's primitive civilization, in E. T. A. Hoffmann's fantastic tale, "Nachricht von einem gebildeten jungen Manne," published as a part of the poet's *Kreisleriana* (1815). This young man, the descendant of a monkey, learned to read, speak, write, and play the piano at the home of a high financier in Berlin. He was a frequent visitor in all the intellectual circles of the capital where, however, he often betrayed his ancestry through his manners. Milo—this is the name of the educated "ape"—now sends a letter to his girl friend Pipi in America, recalling with horror the time when he, uncultured as he was, fell in love with her. He tells her of the splendid education he has enjoyed, of his studies in art and science, and of his general contentment with himself. In addition, he confides to her that once when taking a walk in the park, he climbed up a tree, and another time, when at a party with his old friend, the *Kommerzienrat*, he threw an

<sup>55</sup> V, 173.

apple at the latter's wig. He cherishes, however, the hope of being able to get rid of these remnants of his earlier primitive condition. He concludes his letter by expressing his earnest desire that his friend should also acquire this precious "Kultur."

Even Ernst Christoph von Houwald, best known as the author of fate-tragedies, manifested a keen interest in the public life of the great Western republic. The fifth volume of his *Sämtliche Werke* contains a collection of biographical sketches, entitled "Erinnerungen an grosse, unvergleichliche Männer" (1828). Among these great men the poet ranks William Penn, the founder of Philadelphia. Furthermore, in a sketch entitled "Berg Vernon in Virginien," the writer makes his readers acquainted with the great services which Washington rendered to his country. In this connection, he gives enthusiastic support to the public request of Edward Everett, the famous American statesman and orator, that the old home of Washington should be purchased and honored as a national memorial. Everett was well known among German scholars at that time. In 1814 he was elected professor of the Greek language at Harvard, and, in order to complete his preparatory studies, he went in 1815 to Europe and spent two years at the University of Göttingen. His example was followed in the next two or three decades by a number of other American scholars, such as Cogswell, the Harvard librarian, Motley and Bancroft, the historians, Ticknor and Calvert, the authors, Hedge, the educator, William Emerson, the clergyman, and Longfellow, the poet. The personal contact which these scholars established with distinguished men of letters in Germany, among others with Goethe, contributed largely to stimulating the interest in the development of the United States among intellectual classes in Germany.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Shumway, "The American Students of the University of Göttingen," *G. A. Annals*, N. S., vol. VIII.

The German people, who hoped that the War of Liberation would be followed by a politico-liberal reconstruction of the Fatherland, were profoundly disappointed when the German rulers through their diplomatic instrument, the Austrian statesman Metternich, entered upon a reactionary policy, the aim of which was to repress all democratic tendencies. The inauguration of this policy marked for liberal minds in Germany the beginning of a period of political oppression and persecution. It was only too natural that these men, despairing of the realization of their national hopes, should turn their eyes more longingly than ever to the shores of that country which so often had been exalted as the refuge of civic and individual liberty. Johann Georg Rist,<sup>57</sup> a German diplomat and statesman, voiced the sentiments of these liberal-minded circles in his *Lebenserinnerungen* (1815-1819), wherein he said that the American Revolution had inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the world, and that this great upward movement, then still in progress, gave promise that after the dark clouds of the present had passed, a brighter future was to be expected.<sup>58</sup>

To the political tyranny in Germany there was added, in 1816 and 1817, an economic crisis. Both together drove many thousands of Germans across the Atlantic in those years to begin life anew in the New World as citizens of America's great democracy. The Metternich régime was especially hateful to the academic youth in Germany, which had so enthusiastically fought in the war for national freedom and unity. Giessen was one of those German universities where indignation at the arrogant despotism of the German rulers found its most

<sup>57</sup> J. G. Rist (1775-1847), diplomat and statesman, studied law at the universities of Erlangen and Kiel. He was in the diplomatic service of the Prussian government in Madrid and London, and later held political positions in Hamburg and Schleswig.

<sup>58</sup> Rist, *Lebenserinnerungen* (publ. 1884), I, 10; II, 94.



passionate expression. In clubs and fraternities there students voiced their political radicalism and democratic spirit in inflammatory addresses and revolutionary songs. One of the most radical of these clubs was the league of the "Blacks." Its members soon became objects of suspicion as dangerous conspirators against the Prussian government. An inspiring leader of this group, Karl Follen, a university lecturer, sketched for them in 1819 a plan for the founding of a German republic in America. He declared in this memorial, entitled *Denkschrift über die deutsche Bildungsanstalt in Nordamerika*,<sup>59</sup> that "the Germans of North America can be successfully organized into a state to be represented in Congress, a state which shall become a model for the mother-country and in many respects render it an important service in freeing it from the shackles of tyranny."<sup>60</sup>

At the beginning of 1820 preparations for the emigration into the New World were made. Among the pamphlets of the "Blacks" a poem has been found that reflects the conception of these radicals in regard to America. The poem, entitled "Abschied vom Vaterlande," ends with this stanza:

Ein neues Vaterland geh' ich zu finden,  
 Wo Vater Franklins frische Seele baute,  
 Die münd'ge Welt der eignen Kraft vertraute,  
 Der Freiheit junges Licht sich will entzünden.  
 Da drüben wächst sie auf zur jungen Eiche,  
 Wir bringen Zunder zu den regen Flammen,  
 Zum neuen Kreuzzug, zum gelobten Reiche!  
 Rom ist, wo freie Römer stehn zusammen.<sup>61</sup>

Follen was the first one who felt the wrath of the Prussian authorities. After four years of exile spent in France and

<sup>59</sup> This document is preserved only in the government archives in Berlin.

<sup>60</sup> G. W. Spindler, *Karl Follen, a Biographical Study*, p. 76.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Switzerland, he sought, in 1824, the hospitality of the United States. Before leaving the European continent he addressed to his betrothed, who was to follow him to America, the following lines:

Hast du mich lieb, so gieb mir die Hand,  
Lass uns wandern, lass uns ziehn  
Mit der Sonne nach Westen hin.  
Dort an des Meeres andrem Strand,  
Dort ist die Freiheit, dort des Menschen Vaterland.<sup>62</sup>

On the 19th of December, 1824, Follen arrived in New York. With high ideals he entered the New World and reported in his first letters addressed to his parents the favorable impressions which the new country and its democratic institutions made upon him. At Harvard he became, in 1825, instructor in German, and in 1830 professor of German literature. In 1835, he entered the ministry of the Unitarian Church. Follen was not only a pioneer of German studies in America; he also played an important rôle in the national movements of the Republic and thus came more and more to an intelligent and mature appreciation of American ideals. He lost his life in the burning of the steamboat "Lexington" on Long Island Sound on January 13, 1840.

Besides Follen, other educated Germans soon came to the United States as political refugees, such as Karl Beck, Franz Lieber, Friedrich Münch, Friedrich List. Well grounded as was their hatred of political tyranny at home, the poetical references, quoted above, give proof that their conception of America as the land of universal liberty was inspired by youthful idealism and lacking in a definite knowledge of the real conditions of the country. This enthusiasm was a revival of the spirit with which German poets had exalted America during

<sup>62</sup> Spindler, (see note 60) p. 82.

the Revolutionary War and drew its force from those eloquent accounts of Humboldt and Chateaubriand which had caused such a great sensation throughout the world.

A very important contribution to this phase of our discussion is furnished, furthermore, by the views and works of the poet August von Platen-Hallermünde in the earlier part of his life. During the campaign against Napoleon in France, in 1815, and in the following year on his visit to Switzerland, Platen became a strong exponent of radical-republican ideas.<sup>63</sup> Dissatisfied with his position as an army officer as well as with the general political situation in Europe, he led in Munich from 1816 to 1819 a life of utmost despair. The only light shining for him in this dark period came from America. The notes of Platen's diaries and references contained in his letters and works present in sharp outlines the poet's state of mind and his conception of America in those years.

On Christmas day, 1816, Platen records in his diary for the first time the fact that for several days a longing towards America has strongly occupied his mind. He adds that he had nothing more to expect in the Fatherland and that his position, from which he can not free himself, is loathsome to him.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, on New Year's day, 1817, he confesses that the thought of spending all his life in his present position is unbearable.<sup>65</sup> Again, he writes to his friend Gruber from Ansbach, on January 8, 1817: "Je veux bien vous dire mon projet, quoiqu'il est encore au nombre des châteaux d'Espagne: mon projet est Amérique."<sup>66</sup>

Platen's intention to emigrate to the United States was, as we see, at the outset motivated by his unfortunate personal

<sup>63</sup> H. Renck, *Platen's politische Anschauungen in ihrer Entwicklung*, p. 10 ff.

<sup>64</sup> Platen, *Tagebücher*, I, 711.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 719.

<sup>66</sup> Platen, *Briefwechsel*, I, 403.

affairs; but it was also the result of his political reflections. The poet was evidently infected by the "Europamüdigkeit" of his time. In a diary note, dated Würzburg, June 26, 1818, he expresses the view that all men of culture in Europe would soon emigrate to America, since the reaction of the times and the frivolity of the youth indicated that northern vandals would soon subjugate the Old World.<sup>67</sup>

To this conception corresponds a passage contained in his ballad "Columbus' Erscheinung" (1818), where the spirit of Columbus addresses the Corsican conqueror on his voyage into exile with these words:

Segle nordwärts, sonne dich am Lichte,  
Das umglänzt den stillen Ocean.  
Denn nach Westen flieht die Weltgeschichte,  
Wie ein Herold segelst du voran.<sup>68</sup>

Platen's conception of America is entirely romantic. The poet does not know exactly what he is going to do in the New World nor what he will find there. On both subjects he has only some general, hazy notions, as he admits himself. But he likes the idea, he says.<sup>69</sup> Now he thinks that the United States is, so far, the only country in the world where men of even mediocre talents could find a tolerable position. He would like to make a career there, even if he had to content himself with being a plain language teacher in Philadelphia. He will be inconvenienced by the discomforts of the voyage, to be sure; he hopes, however, that his will-power will overcome this difficulty.<sup>70</sup> Then again, the idea enters his mind of settling in the United States as a farmer, but he believes that such a plan

<sup>67</sup> Platen, *Tagebücher*, II, 74.

<sup>68</sup> *Platens Sämtliche Werke* (Koch u. Petzet), II, 23-24.

<sup>69</sup> *Tagbr.*, I, 711.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*



would be advisable only if supported by a considerable amount of money and an excellent knowledge of farm management.<sup>71</sup>

What was the poet's real conception of America? In a distich "Amerika" (January 4, 1817) he calls the Republic "the hope of the world, a great and budding woman" in contrast with the "ill-famed, fading maid Europe."<sup>72</sup> Again, in a palinode addressed to his friend von Lüder (October 1817), the New World appears to him as

. . . . . Land der Pracht,  
Wo der Freiheit stolzes Leben zwischen Palmen auferwacht.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, in a dramatic sketch, "Marat's Tod" (1820), the poet speaks of the country "across the sea, where freedom and peace dwell."<sup>74</sup>

America is, thus, for Platen the ultimate refuge of European culture and liberty. It is, however, significant that this conception is not a result of the poet's political attitude, but rather of his poetic imagination. In a note in his diary, dated Ansbach, June 4, 1817, the writer says, referring to his distich "Amerika," that although he has not yet the slightest idea how to carry out his plan of emigration, he always likes to develop from his standpoint as a poet any idea that comes to him.<sup>75</sup>

The period from 1818 to 1825 marked a decided change in the poet's radical political views. More and more he became reconciled to the conditions of his time. As early as September 16, 1817, he writes to Lüder that he wants to stay in Germany for several years in order to extend his studies as much as possible, and then go to America,

<sup>71</sup> *Briefwechsel*, I, 431.

<sup>72</sup> *Platens Sämliche Werke*, VI, 191-192.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 62.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 91.

<sup>75</sup> Platen, *Tagbr.*, I, 720.

Um keinem untertan zu sein, und dankbar,  
Und durch mich selbst zu werden, was ich bin.<sup>76</sup>

In October 1817, Platen followed his friend Lüder's advice not to lend his services to a foreign people across the Atlantic, but to devote them to the Fatherland. Platen states his determination to give up his plan concerning America and to remain loyal to his country.<sup>77</sup> In his palinode to Lüder, mentioned above, he now looks back upon his former ideas as:

Erhitzter Wahn der Jugend,  
Der das Glück sich fern verheisst.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, Platen enters in his diary, on February 21, 1820, his readiness to serve his state as soon as he obtains a position commensurate with his talents.<sup>79</sup>

Platen's enthusiasm for America was, thus, only temporary and theoretical. He is not clear either as to the purpose of his planned emigration or regarding the real conditions in the New World. His longing for the "land of liberty" was the result of his mental disposition and his Romantic imagination. It is very likely that the poet was influenced in this respect by Heinrich Zschokke, with whom he became acquainted on his visit to Switzerland in 1816. To this German-Swiss admirer of America we must now turn.

Heinrich Zschokke was born in Magdeburg in 1771. He studied theology and philosophy at the University of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder. Gifted with a keen intellect and a sensitive imagination, he was at an early age equally attracted by the theories of the French Revolution and the religious devotion

<sup>76</sup> Platen, *Briefwechsel*, I, 437.

<sup>77</sup> Platen, *Tagbr.*, I, 840.

<sup>78</sup> *Platens Sämtliche Werke*, II, 62-63.

<sup>79</sup> Platen, *Tagbr.*, II, 364.

of the Herrnhuter. In 1795 he visited Switzerland, and finding the atmosphere of the Republic congenial to his political views, selected that country as the place of his permanent abode. At first Reichenau and later Aarau became the center of his many-sided and successful activities as author and philanthropist. In the sentimental spirit of Rousseau, Basedow, and Pestalozzi, Zschokke energetically advocated the fundamental principles of human right and morality. Although not a great original writer, he soon gained a world-wide popularity as an enlightener of the masses through the publication of historical works, popular magazines, novels, and devotional literature. In him and his works the Romantic enthusiasm for America reached its peak. The wide-spread popular belief in the Western Republic as the home of mankind's future civilization found in him its most forceful exponent. As Bodmer, the publisher of Zschokke's works, says of him: "Zschokke looked admiringly across the seas, convinced that in the United States of America the most liberal nation, the pride of the age, the vanguard of humanity was advancing on the road to perfection. The writer's sons had to learn the language of the New World."<sup>80</sup>

Zschokke was equally familiar with the historical past and the contemporary condition of America. Thus, in his novel *Die Gründung von Maryland* (1820) he unrolls before our eyes a fascinating picture of early colonial times, while in various articles he acquaints us with events and currents of America's public life, such as the activities of the Massachusetts Peace Society and the anti-slavery societies, the religious sect of the Dunkers in Pennsylvania, the advancement of public instruction and the missionary work of the Christian church in our country.

Zschokke was, indeed, very well informed about America. He gained his knowledge from books on American history and accounts of travel in the New World. Of the latter he especially

<sup>80</sup> *Zschokkes Werke*, ed. by Bodmer, I, Einl. p. LXXIII.

mentions La Rochefoucauld Liancourt's *Voyage dans les États-Unis d'Amérique* (1795-1799)<sup>81</sup> and Le Bossu's *Nouveaux voyages d'Amérique septentrionale* (1770-1771).<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, he was familiar with American literary publications which dealt with questions of public interest. Above all, he was in touch with Swiss settlers in America, from whom he received frequent reports on conditions in this country.

As early as 1804 Zschokke sketched nature and life in America in his novel *Die Prinzessin von Wolfenbüttel*, the first Romantic novel of this kind in German literature. The deep longing of Europeans, weary of the culture of the Old World and looking towards America as the land of primeval nature, here finds its most perfect expression. This novel is based on a probably legendary account according to which a German princess, Christine of Wolfenbüttel, in order to escape from cruel treatment by her husband, the Czarevitch Alexis, son of Peter the Great, fled from Russia and emigrated with a few companions to America. We accompany the party on their journey to Louisiana, where they found the colony of Christinental. The author describes this journey, especially the entrance from the sea into the mouth of the Mississippi, the city of New Orleans, the life of the planter in Louisiana, and the war between the Indian tribes, with a romantic splendor and, on the other hand, with a realism which compares very favorably with the art displayed in the works of Sealsfield.

In the novel *Der Pflanzer von Cuba* (1832) Zschokke introduces a native of Switzerland who traveled in 1825 through the Western Hemisphere, then settled as a planter in the West Indies, and now gives an account of his daily pursuits in a letter to a friend abroad. The planter mentions that he would like to settle in North America, although the climate throughout

<sup>81</sup> Publ. in 1799.

<sup>82</sup> Publ. 1777.



the country was unpleasant and even dangerous on account of the uncertainty of the weather. America is, he goes on to say, a prosperous country, with a rich and virgin soil, full of resources for a not entirely destitute settler and even for a poor immigrant. "It will surely become a true Promised Land, where such a man has the necessities of life in abundance and can prepare the most promising possessions for his children and grandchildren. America is the only country in the world, so far as we know, where men (to be sure, only the white men, so far) can breathe freely and enjoy without fear the privileges bestowed upon them by their Creator; it is a land where those dangerous and hateful prerogatives of birth are unknown which in other countries authorize white men to crush their fellow-men into the dust. Up to date these free states have preserved an unparalleled record on the pages of their history."<sup>83</sup>

As a disciple of Rousseau, Zschokke has, of course, very humane and mild views concerning the aborigines in America. He portrays the Indians as "friendly primitive peoples, called by the Europeans savages because they are free and not slaves"<sup>84</sup> and praises them as the helpful neighbors of European settlers in America's wilderness. He challenges the reports of travelers who tell of the barbarous habits and cruelties of these people, and says: "We must not always think that these so-called savages are really so savage. To be sure, they are somewhat rude and rough, but, on the other hand, less insidious and smooth-tongued, a fact that should count at least for something. Barbarism resulting from lack of culture and barbarism due to an excess of culture are equally loathsome. Only the former is found among the American Indians, but both are at home in Europe."<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Zschokke, *Novellen u. Dichtungen*, III, 270.

<sup>84</sup> Zschokke, *Ausgew. Schriften*, XIX, 137.

<sup>85</sup> Zschokke, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, III, 313.

It is with the most ardent enthusiasm that Zschokke extols America as the land of the future in contrast to Europe with its dying culture. "America or Europe," he exclaims, "what man of vigor and optimism can be in doubt as to how to choose between these two countries? Here we witness the last struggle of old forms, old ideas, ancient empires; there we are organizers of new orders, founders of new states. Here we find only secular and spiritual despotism, bondage of religion and thought, increasing Oriental tyranny, Oriental caste feeling, Oriental lust for war and destruction,—there man is enthroned in his eternal right, free in his religion and opinion, without a master and a servant, as rich and great as his industry and worth make him, a conqueror with the plough, spreading divine thoughts among savages, while in Europe the noble 'savages' punish the divine thought with prison and exile."<sup>86</sup> "Who can say how Asiatic this Europe must become in the course of a few centuries, while America in the meantime has become more and more shining in the light of liberty, science, and art?"<sup>87</sup> Even Greece, which in the twenties of the nineteenth century attracted the attention of Europe's men of culture, cannot be compared with America. "The Potomac rolls its youthful waves in the splendor of the rising sun, while the Eurotas already for centuries has been creeping along in inglorious obscurity. In the center of life we shall place in America the noblest ideas ever conceived by the human mind about the establishment of social life, and also the results of political wisdom, based on the world-experiences of centuries and unrestrained by the relics of an outworn inheritance."<sup>88</sup>

The same idea Zschokke expresses in a very peculiar way in a treatise entitled "Europen's Niedergang—Amerika's

<sup>86</sup> Zschokke, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, XIX, 103.

<sup>87</sup> Zschokke, *Ausgew. Schriften*, XIX, 148.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Aufgang,"<sup>89</sup> which appeared first in 1818 in the monthly *Überlieferungen zur Geschichte unserer Zeit*, published from 1817 to 1823 by the author. In this treatise the writer seeks to show how an American citizen after his return from abroad would report to a State assembly on conditions in Europe. He begins his report by picturing the irreparable misery which he has found all over the Old World. It is wrong, he says, to consider the emigrants as the outcasts of the Old Continent; they should be called "the sons of America born in Europe." "In our country," he adds, "we value a man according to his personal qualities. The Europeans take into account only an imaginary value stamped upon him by his 'äussere Gepräge.'"

In the conclusion of his address the speaker pays the highest tribute to his native America in words of inspiration and enthusiasm. "And thou," he says, "youthful, budding America, baptized with blood by the hands of European avarice, and consecrated thus to liberty, mayest thou rise to splendor through the coming centuries, protected by thy roaring seas, as a land chosen by Providence in the history of mankind. Not long ago despised and mocked by thy hoary, old-fashioned foster-mother, thou art now already admired by the wisest of the world, envied by its mightiest, and a comfort to those in affliction. Africa is sleeping inertly under the sun-rays of her hot sky; Asia is returning in the rotation of history to the old barbarism of ancient times; Europe timidly follows her Oriental ancestress (orientalische Altmutter); America shall now become the home of humanity's culture and the light of the globe to which the

<sup>89</sup> Copied from 18th century travel books in which Chinamen similarly report their impressions of Europe (cf. Martino, *L'Orient dans la littérature française au 17<sup>e</sup> et au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle*). Goedeke (*Grundriss z. Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, X, p. 96) notes in regard to Zschokke's treatise: "from the English of G. T. Wyatt in No. 21 of the *Hebdomadal Survey of Literature and Pclitical-nes*" [sic]; but no record of such a periodical has been found.

wise men of all zones will raise their eyes in yearning and prayer."<sup>90</sup>

There can be no doubt that Zschokke, with his great popularity and far-reaching influence, contributed much to the spread of the ideal, romantic conception of America in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. His works certainly inspired a great number of contemporary German writers on America, such as Sealsfield, Spindler, Biernatzki, and Willkomm. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Zschokke's appreciation of America was only sentimental and theoretical. It is, indeed, very significant in this respect that he never drew the practical consequences of his enthusiasm for the New World. Neither he nor any one of his twelve sons seems ever to have contemplated so much as a visit to the land of his longing, much less a permanent settlement there. America was simply for him the land of romance, covered with virgin forests and inhabited by primitive peoples, and the "home of the free." In his later years the writer came to have more sober and mature views in regard to the New World. In his novels published in the forties, he sometimes points to defects in America's public life. In *Lyonel Harlington* (1844) he speaks of the budding, not yet unfolded states of America, covered with the mildew of European customs and ideas (unentfaltete Staatenknospe, überzogen vom Meltau europäischer Sitten und Denk-art).<sup>91</sup> In the novel *Ein Buckliger* (1839) a European settler in the Western States describes in these words the conditions which he has found: "In regard to the people here around me, they have no sense for God's wonderful nature. They wander around without feeling, religiously disposed, but without political sentiment. They are nothing but genuine Yankees who go and come and speculate on the sublimest objects in

<sup>90</sup> Zschokke, *Ausgew. Schriften*, X, 322.

<sup>91</sup> Zschokke, *Novellen u. Dichtungen*, II, 422.



nature, trying to find out if there is any way of making money out of them; they think that any concern about such things as inspire us, is the surest way to deadly dulness." Again, he calls America "a land where a colored man is repulsed, despised, excluded from the society of white people, and public republican opinion finds this quite sensible, just, and natural."<sup>92</sup>

The few references of this kind, however, cannot obscure the outstanding fact that Zschokke was one of the strongest and most enthusiastic advocates of America in German imaginative literature during the first half of the nineteenth century.

One of the most influential factors in the presentation of America in German imaginative literature was the translation and circulation in Germany of the works of Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper. It is not our purpose to trace in detail the influence of these American novelists upon German writers. This field has already been covered by the works of Price,<sup>93</sup> Sauer,<sup>94</sup> Plath,<sup>95</sup> and especially Barba.<sup>96</sup> Suffice it here to sum up the results of their investigations insofar as they have a bearing on the subject under discussion and to supplement them through the results of our own researches.

Washington Irving's *Sämtliche Werke*, rendered into German by a number of translators and edited by August Fischer, were published 1826 to 1837 by Sauerländer in Frankfort-on-the-Main in 74 volumes. Goethe read the *Sketch Book* in English in 1823. Plath states that Irving's works were much read in

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.—This novel is a translation of a French novel (Goedeke).

<sup>93</sup> L. M. Price, "English > German literary influences," II, *Survey*, pp. 557 ff. (*University of California Publications in Modern Philology*, vol. IX).

<sup>94</sup> Aug. Sauer, "Über den Einfluss der nordamerik. Literatur auf die deutsche" (*Jahrb. der Grillparzergesellschaft*, 1906, pp. 21 ff.).

<sup>95</sup> Otto Plath, "Wash. Irvings Einfluss auf Wilh. Hauff" (*Euphorion*, XX, 459).

<sup>96</sup> Preston A. Barba, "Cooper in Germany" (*G. A. Annals*, N. S., XII).

Germany and exerted a considerable influence upon contemporary German writers, such as Heine, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, and especially Wilhelm Hauff. He discusses at length the similarities existing between the latter's *Wirtshaus im Spessart* (1827) and Irving's *Italian Banditti* (1824) and comes to this conclusion: "Man kann wohl mit ziemlicher Sicherheit behaupten, dass Hauff mindestens drei von Irvings Werken gekannt hat, das *Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge-Hall* und die *Tales of a Traveller*."<sup>97</sup>

Of much greater importance for our special subject was the appearance of Cooper's novels in Germany. The first translations were published in 1824. They were: *Die Ansiedler oder die Quellen des Susquehanna*, *Der Spion*, und *Der Lotse oder Abenteuer an Englands Küste*. The following years brought *Lionel Lincoln oder die Belagerung von Boston* (1825), *Der Letzte der Mohikaner* (1826), *Die Steppe*, *Red Rover*, *Der rote Freibeuter*, *Der Nordamerikaner* (1828). From 1829 this number increased considerably. In the period between 1824 and 1850 altogether about one hundred translations of Cooper's novels were published in Germany.<sup>98</sup> The first series of Cooper's novels appeared in Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1826 from Sauerländer's press,<sup>99</sup> which in the following year also collected the American novels of Paulding and Dr. Bird into a *Bibliothek klassischer Schriftsteller Nordamerikas*. Furthermore, German magazines, especially the *Ausland*,<sup>100</sup> frequently published parts of the works or brief complete sketches by Irving and Cooper in the thirties and forties. On June 1, 1831 this German magazine contained

<sup>97</sup> Plath, "Wash. Irvings Einfluss auf W. Hauff," p. 470.

<sup>98</sup> Barba, "Cooper in Germany," p. 48.

<sup>99</sup> Translated by several translators, such as H. Döring, Juditta, Treu, Meurer.

<sup>100</sup> *Das Ausland, ein Tageblatt für Kunde des geistigen u. sittlichen Lebens der Völker* (München, Cotta, 1828-1892).

a biographical sketch of Cooper and a favorable critique of his works and his personality as a writer: "Like Columbus he had turned his sail toward seas yet unknown to us and cheerfully opened before our eyes a new world. Europe jubilantly greeted him as the American Walter Scott, recognizing his mission to become the portrayer of his people, to describe the manners of his nation, to extol its deeds, to depict the sublime beauty of a very singular Nature, but above all to become the herald of his country's glory and liberty, and to win for America the 'toga' of religious and political freedom, also the laurel of intellectual liberty." The same article emphasizes the fact that in Cooper's works everything is action, life, poetry, and that his style excels in brilliancy and picturesqueness.

Hardly had the first translations of Cooper appeared, when they took the hearts of German readers by storm. Never before had the characteristic life of the great Republic been brought so close to them. Furthermore, as Barba says, "In the primeval forests of Cooper's novels the tired spirits of Europe found a fresh and invigorating atmosphere."<sup>101</sup> The vivid and realistic descriptions of frontier life, so attractive just at the time of the great German emigrations; of the redskin, still somewhat romantic, to be sure, but far more natural than Chateaubriand's French parlor-Indian; and of the backwoods and prairies, now became an inexhaustible source of ever new allurements to the excited imagination of the German reading public. Still more important was it that these novels attracted the close attention and imitative interest of German writers. We shall see later that Goethe not only read some of Cooper's works, but fell under their influence when he wrote his *Novelle*. That Adalbert Stifter, especially in depicting the solitude of the forest, was under the direct influence of the American novelist, has been shown by Sauer, who says, "Durch Coopers Eingreifen ist aus

<sup>101</sup> Barba, "Cooper in Germany," p. 5.

einem mittelmässigen Maler ein hervorragender Dichter geworden."<sup>102</sup> Charles Sealsfield's *Tokeah, or the White Rose* (1828) and Fanny Lewald's *Diogena* (1847) each clearly betray traces of the writer's familiarity with Cooper's Indian tales. Mörike mentions in his letters the fact that he and his family greatly enjoyed the reading of Cooper's sea-tales.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, the translation of these American novels opens, as we shall see, a new epoch in the presentation of the United States in German imaginative literature, and we need not be surprised, therefore, to note that after the ideal-romantic conception of the first three decades America appears in German poetry and fiction from 1830 on in a new and more realistic light.

We must now turn our attention to the discussion of Goethe's attitude toward America.<sup>103a</sup>

Almost throughout his life the great German poet manifested a remarkable interest in the development and conditions of the New World. Even in his earlier works, *Das Neueste von Plundersweilen*<sup>104</sup> (1780) and *Die Mitschuldigen*<sup>105</sup> (1787), we find allusions to the American war and the soldier-traffic of the Hessians. To the Revolutionary War the poet refers also in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, where he relates that, whereas in his youth the noted figures of Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine II of Russia, and Gustave III of Sweden commanded

<sup>102</sup> Sauer, "Über den Einfluss der nordam. Literatur auf die deutsche," p. 51. Cf. also *Adalb. Stifters Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Sauer, I, pp. XLVI ff.

<sup>103</sup> *Mörikes Briefe*, p. 165.

<sup>103a</sup> A treatise, *Goethe and America* (Urbana, 1925), published by Walter Wadepuhl, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois, after the completion of this dissertation, deals with Goethe's attitude toward America from a different point of view.

<sup>104</sup> *Das Neueste von Plundersweilen*, line 7-12.

<sup>105</sup> *Die Mitschuldigen*, I, 1 and III, 3.—The work was written 1765-1766; the respective passages appeared first in the Göschen edition of 1787.



the general attention, "the lively interest of the world was still more excited when a whole people prepared to effect their independence." "Man wünschte den Amerikanern alles Glück, und die Namen Franklin und Washington fingen an am politischen Himmel zu glänzen und zu funkeln."<sup>106</sup> It may be that Lilli Schönmann did not mean in earnest the statement which some people attributed to her, that for love of Goethe she was ready to renounce all present ties and advantages and go with him to America. Of greater interest is the significant explanation which Goethe adds to this passage: "America was then (1775), perhaps still more than now (1818), the Eldorado of all who found themselves restricted in their present circumstances."<sup>107</sup> Another evidence of Goethe's early interest in America are two Indian poems, published in 1782 in the *Tiefurter Journal*: "Todeslied eines Gefangenen" and "Liebeslied eines Wilden."<sup>108</sup> These poems show that Goethe did not believe in the myth of the "noble savage"; they characterize the American Indians as real savages.

The action of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96) takes place also during the period of the Revolutionary War. Lothario, together with a few Frenchmen, distinguished himself in the service of the colonies<sup>109</sup> and endeavored later to make himself useful in America, exposing himself to great dangers in an active life.<sup>110</sup> The romantic conception of America as a refuge in the chaotic conditions of the time is reflected in Jarno's invitation to Wilhelm to emigrate with him to America, since property was almost nowhere quite secure and mighty changes were at hand.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *Dichtung u. Wahrheit*, W. A., XXIX (Buch 17, S. 68).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, (Buch 19, S. 156).

<sup>108</sup> *Goethes Werke*, W. A., IV, 320.

<sup>109</sup> *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, W. A., XXII (Buch 4, S. 103).

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIII (Buch 7, S. 20).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIII (Buch 8, S. 235).

Even more numerous are the references to America contained in the *Wanderjahre* (1821-1829). How familiar the writer was with the cultural relations between the Old World and the New World is shown in the following passage: "The brisk, lively impetus towards America in the beginning of the eighteenth century was considerable, inasmuch as every one on this side who felt himself in any degree dissatisfied, hoped over there to emancipate himself. This impetus was encouraged by the desirable possessions which could be obtained before the population had as yet spread further westward. Whole so-called counties were still for sale on the border of the inhabited territory."<sup>112</sup> It was at that time that the grandfather of the proprietor of the castle where Wilhelm stops on his travels had emigrated to America. He acquired considerable possessions and adopted for their management the liberal principles of the country's economic and social life. The grandson, however, came back to Europe in his youth and, admiring its ancient culture, preferred to stay there. "He preferred to lose himself as a fellow-worker amidst the great mass moving in orderly activity, rather than there beyond the seas, many centuries behind his age, playing the part of an Orpheus and Lycurgus."<sup>113</sup> He would rather retrench and accommodate himself to his neighbors than be fighting with the Iroquois in order to expel them, or be deceiving them by contracts in order to drive them out of their marshes, where the newcomer would be tortured to death by mosquitoes. Thus the *Schlossherr* dealt with his family estates in a liberal spirit and established a community based on American progressive principles within the old world of culture, which, he holds, may also in a certain sense often be regarded as a wilderness.

<sup>112</sup> *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, p. 43 (in vol. V of *The Works of Goethe*, translated by Hjalmar H. Boyesen).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

At the conclusion of the *Wanderjahre* the project of emigrating to the New World, as conceived by the secret society of the *Lehrjahre*, is to be carried out in grand style. In this connection Bielschowsky, in his biography of Goethe, points out how the poet's views in regard to emigration have changed. While in the *Lehrjahre* Lothario, cured of his delusion, returns from America and exclaims on his old home estate: "Here or nowhere is America!", and while even in the first edition of the *Wanderjahre* (1821) Goethe calls the idea of emigration a whim, in the second edition (1827) Wilhelm says: "In the Old World everything moves at a jog trot; people always want to treat new things in the old way and growing institutions after a dead fashion."<sup>114</sup> For this reason a part of the *Bund* will emigrate.<sup>115</sup>

The duties which its members take upon them are analogous to American liberal views: political and religious liberty, the practice and encouragement of morality without pedantry and severity, the infliction of punishment according to humanitarian principles, systematic activity for the common good, and strenuous pioneer-work in the still unsettled and untilled tracts of nature. In this connection the statement is significant that the society is very desirous "to take the advantages of culture over to the other side and leave behind its disadvantages."<sup>116</sup> These words, evidently, refer to the conviction so widespread at that time, as we have seen, that European culture was on the decline and American civilization still in its infancy.

When Goethe wrote the *Wanderjahre*, especially between 1816 and 1829, three important influences drew his attention and thoughts to the Western continent, giving him, at the same time, a splendid opportunity of gathering first-hand information about the New World. These influences were,

<sup>114</sup> Bielschowsky, *The Life of Goethe* (transl. by W. A. Cooper), III, 220.

<sup>115</sup> Bielschowsky, *Goethes Leben u. Werke*, II, 542-543.

<sup>116</sup> *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, W. A., XXV, 214.

first, the poet's personal intercourse and correspondence with Americans, secondly, his study of literary works on America, and, finally, the travels of Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach in the United States.

A considerable number of educated Americans who came to Germany in the first decades of the nineteenth century availed themselves of the opportunity to come into personal contact with the great German poet in Weimar.

On the 2d of January, 1810, Aaron Burr, the famous American statesman, came to Weimar and met Goethe several times. On October 25, 1816 George Ticknor and Edward Everett paid their respects to the poet. On May 10, 1819, Joseph Green Cogswell went to see him and during their conversation, Goethe, supposedly in jest, exclaimed: "If we were twenty years younger, we would sail for America."<sup>117</sup> With fine tact the poet soon turned the conversation to America and its hopes and promises and astonished Cogswell through his minute knowledge of the physical and moral conditions of the country and its people.<sup>118</sup> On October 12, 1819, George Bancroft met Goethe in Jena, and later wrote to him from Göttingen on November 10, 1819: "As every American must be greatly pleased, so am I that you think our newly arisen country, so very poor in art and learning, worthy of your special attention."<sup>119</sup> George H. Calvert has given in his memoirs, entitled *First Years in Europe* (1866), an interesting account of the impressions which he received from his visit to Weimar. He came to the German Athens on the 27th of March, 1825, and succeeded in seeing the poet on the afternoon of the same day. He relates that the main topic of their conversation was the election of John Quincy Adams to be President of the

<sup>117</sup> *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, V, 219.

<sup>118</sup> Ticknor, *Life of J. G. Cogswell*, p. 58.

<sup>119</sup> *Goethe-Jahrb.*, XXV, 18.



United States, news of which had just reached Germany, and that Goethe wished to understand the mode and forms of election in America.<sup>120</sup> Wahr says in regard to these visits: "Goethe's knowledge of America was enlarged by such meetings, and the visitors returned home fondly cherishing in their memories the few hours spent with him. They were able to furnish him welcome information concerning the limitless opportunities of the United States in both cultural and commercial directions. They procured for him geological specimens and books on America, and thereby fostered his interest in the geological formation of the American continent. They helped to keep him in touch with the latest English and American literary productions, and interested him in the educational endeavors in the New World."<sup>121</sup>

In the lively correspondence which followed the personal intercourse between Goethe and the Americans,<sup>122</sup> a letter addressed to Cogswell (June 27, 1818) gives further proof of the poet's marked interest in the United States. He writes: "Consecrant quelques semaines de loisir à étendre et à perfectionner l'idée générale que j'avais conçue de la situation tant passée que présente des États-Unis de l'Amérique, je m'entoure de tous les ouvrages anciens, ainsi que des descriptions de voyage les plus récentes. La contemplation de cet état immense, composé de tant de diverses régions, a fait naître en moi le désir bien naturel de l'en connaître les rapports géologiques."<sup>123</sup> In this connection L. Fränkl points out that in writing the conclusion of the second part of his *Faust* Goethe

<sup>120</sup> Calvert, *op. cit.*, p. 170.—Additional visitors are mentioned in *Goethe-Jahrb.*, XXV, 22.

<sup>121</sup> Fred. B. Wahr, *Emerson and Goethe*, p. 41.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Leonard L. Mackall, "Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe u. Amerikanern," *Goethe-Jahrb.*, XXV.

<sup>123</sup> *Goethe Briefe*, W. A., XXIX, 212.

probably was influenced by his interest in the marvelous development of a young culture across the seas, as evidenced by his study of American contemporary conditions and stimulated by his American visitors in Weimar.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, it was largely through the efforts of Cogswell that Goethe was induced to present in 1819 an edition of his scientific and poetic works to the library of Harvard University.<sup>125</sup> The dedicatory letter (dated Weimar, August 11, 1819) which accompanied the transatlantic shipment runs as follows: "The enclosed poetical and scientific works are presented to the library of Cambridge University in New England as a mark of deep interest in its high literary character, and in the successful zeal it has displayed through so long a course of years for the promotion of solid and elegant education."<sup>126</sup>

A second important factor in increasing Goethe's knowledge of the United States was his extensive study of American scientific and imaginative literature. We need only look over the entries in his diaries and letters, especially in the twenties, to note how desirous the writer was to secure for himself all kinds of publications concerning the New World. Still more astonishing is the manysidedness of his interest in American affairs.

<sup>124</sup> *Goethe-Jahrb.*, XV, 288. Cf. also Goethe's conversation with Eckermann on the Panama canal (mentioned later) and the lines of the *Achilleis*:

. . . . . Fernem Gestade  
Führt er den Überfluss der Bürger zu; Küsten und Syrten  
Wimmeln von neuem Volk, des Raums und der Nahrung begierig.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. correspondence between Goethe and Cogswell (*Goethe-Jahrb.*, XXV, 9 ff.).

<sup>126</sup> *Goethe-Jahrb.*, XV, 288.—According to information received from the Librarian of the Harvard College Library, the twenty volumes of Goethe's works which he sent to Harvard through Joseph G. Cogswell, are still carefully preserved, although in former years they saw constant service, and are somewhat worn. They contain no inscription in Goethe's hand, but the record of the source from which they were received was made at the time the books arrived.

On the 15th of June 1818, the poet begs G ldenapfel as a favor to lend him for a short time one of the descriptions of travel in the North-American States; he would be especially obliged, he writes, for a map "dieses merkw rdigen Staates."<sup>127</sup> A few days later he writes to C. G. von Voigt: "I am surrounded by a multitude of treatises and works setting forth the conditions of the United States of America. It is worth while to look into such a growing world."<sup>128</sup> As a natural scientist Goethe took a particular interest, of course, in the geological and geognostic conditions in America. In 1819 he read the account of Lewis and Clark's exploring expedition (1804-1806) across the continent to the mouth of the Columbia River; in 1822 Struve's work on American mineralogy, in 1823 Irving's *Sketch Book* and Ludwig Gall's *Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten* (1822).<sup>129</sup> In 1825 the Mexican mines attracted the scientist's attention. In a geological sketch of September 18, 1819<sup>130</sup> Goethe wrote: "Nordamerikaner gl cklich, keine Basalte zu haben. Keine Ahnen und keinen klassischen Boden." The same idea is expressed in a *Xenie*, dedicated to the United States and sent to Zelter on July 17, 1827:

Amerika, du hast es besser  
 Als unser Continent, das alte,  
 Hast keine verfallene Schl sser  
 Und keine Basalte;  
 Dich st rt nicht im Innern  
 Zu lebendiger Zeit  
 Unn tzes Erinnern  
 Und vergeblicher Streit.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>127</sup> *Goethes Briefe*, W. A., XXIX, 199.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>129</sup> To be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>130</sup> *Goethes Werke*, W. A., 2 Abt., Bd. 13, p. 314.

<sup>131</sup> *Goethes Briefe*, W. A., XLII, 378.

In August 1825 Goethe reads and excerpts Alexander von Humboldt's work of travel and in this connection studies the question of the Central-American canal. This subject he later takes up again in a conversation with Eckermann, where he calls attention to the importance of such a canal not only for the United States, but for "the whole human race, civilized and uncivilized." He goes on to say, "I should be surprised if the United States were to let an opportunity escape of getting such work into their own hands. It may be foreseen that this young State, with its decided urge toward the West, will in thirty or forty years have occupied and peopled the large tract of land beyond the Rocky Mountains."<sup>132</sup> In 1826 Goethe provides himself with a treatise contained in Archenholz-Bran's magazine *Minerva*, concerning the mines of the New World. In addition he reads Keating's *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeck* (1824), the German translation of Warden's *Historical Account of the United States* and Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution*. In 1826 the poet also took up the reading of Cooper, in whose novels he took a keen interest.<sup>133</sup> He became acquainted with *The Pioneers*, *The Spy*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pilot*, *The Prairie*, and *Red Rover*. In a valuable monograph, Dr. Sp. Wukadinović has given conclusive proof of the influence of Cooper's novels upon Goethe's *Novelle*, on which the latter was engaged while reading the works of the first great American novelist. From the reading of these novels and from Gall's description of his tour, mentioned above, the German poet gained an interesting idea. He thought that these works contained excellent material for the conception and production

<sup>132</sup> Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, III, 83.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. *Goethes Tagebücher*, X, Sept. 30 (1826), Oct. 1, 2, 15, 22-28. *Goethes Briefe*, vol. 43, p. 108. Bernhard Seuffert, "Goethes Novelle" (*Goethe-Jahrb.* XIV, 133). Sp. Wukadinović, *Goethes Novelle* (1909), pp. 83 ff.



of a great epic or drama which would have as its background the colonial and political history of the United States, and as its subject the settlement of immigrants under the leadership of a Protestant minister.<sup>134</sup>

A third factor in concentrating Goethe's mind upon America was the tour of Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach in America in 1825 and 1826, and the poet's study of the Duke's journal.<sup>135</sup> In a letter to the Grand Duke at the beginning of January, 1826, he calls this work "höchst erfreulich und geisteserhebend" and praises the traveler's "zugleich tüchtige und verständige Behandlungsweise jener neuen Bewohner der neuen Welt."<sup>136</sup> On April 26, 1826, he asks for permission to read some of the pages of this diary, then still in manuscript, expressing his desire "to go for a visit through known and unknown parts of the North-American States with the book of this sturdy prince as a guide."<sup>137</sup> On May 21, he began the reading of the Duke's diary, especially of the chapters dealing with the traveler's visit to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington.<sup>138</sup> In July Goethe expressed to Karl August his appreciation of the literary work and his respect for the author, and indicated those accounts which attracted his special interest.<sup>139</sup> Two months later he wrote to Boisserée that the description of the social conditions of the United States as given in the diary, was particularly noteworthy.<sup>140</sup> Again, in a letter to Zelter he stated his admiration

<sup>134</sup> *Goethes Werke*, W. A., XLI, 293.

<sup>135</sup> *Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nordamerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826*.—The diary was published in 1828. This work will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>136</sup> *Goethes Briefe*, W. A., XL, 225.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, XLI, 17.

<sup>138</sup> *Goethes Tagebücher*, May 21, July 2-4, 1826.

<sup>139</sup> *Goethes Briefe*, XLI, 92.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.—Cf. also the poem "Dem Herzog Bernhard von Sachsen-Weimar" am 15. Sept. 1826 (*G.s Werke*, W. A., IV, 309).

for the excellent manner in which the distinguished traveler managed to make himself popular among all classes of the American people.<sup>141</sup> Finally, on New Year's day, 1827, the poet informed Duke Bernhard himself, "die wohlbenutzte Reisezeit habe ihm die reinste Teilnahme und höchste Bewunderung abgewonnen."<sup>142</sup>

Summing up our discussion of Goethe's attitude towards America, we note the following facts: The poet manifested a keen interest in the history and geography of the United States, especially in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. In addition, he directed his close attention to the current events of the Western Republic, well aware of its increasing importance as a world power. In order to obtain reliable information about the conditions prevailing in the country he got together a considerable mass of literature on the subject. But it was especially the visit of Americans to Weimar and the travels of Duke Bernhard that gave the German poet a welcome opportunity to inform himself regarding public affairs in the New World.

We have already mentioned that Wilhelm Hauff was familiar with some of Washington Irving's novels. There are a few passages in his works where the German novelist refers to America. In the *Memoiren des Satans* (1826) he treats with humor and derision the enthusiasm of an American who came to Germany just for the purpose of seeing Goethe. In addition, he carps at the many-sided scientific knowledge which the poet displayed in his conversation with the American, which so impressed the latter that he, abashed as he was, finally began to thaw into naturalness.<sup>143</sup>

In the novel *Die letzten Ritter von Marienburg* (1828) Hauff points out that through inventions and literary translations

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, XLII, 2.

<sup>143</sup> *Hauffs Werke*, II, 120-121.

America has lately come so close to the Germans that they now speak of the New World with the same accuracy and the same feeling of nearness with which their grandfathers spoke of France.<sup>144</sup>

In "Die Bücher und die Lesewelt" (1828) the author regrets that he has found in many classes of the German people an unnatural craving (*unnatürliche Sucht*) for novels in the fashion of Irving's and Cooper's works. He states that, although he would be the last one to detract from the literary merits of the American writers, culture would certainly not gain very much through the fact that every seamstress could now buy for a few "Taler" a *Bibliothek klassischer Romane* and, then, pass opinions such as, "es ist doch nicht so schön wie Walter Scott und Cooper und nicht so tief und witzig als Washington Irving."<sup>145</sup> Evidently Hauff here refers to the collection of American novels published by Sauerländer, mentioned above, and realizes the detrimental effect which an extensive importation of foreign literature would bring upon the circulation of his own works.

Friedrich Rückert was throughout his life such a fervent German patriot that favorable reference to contemporary America finds no place in his works. Inspired by patriotic sentiment, he strongly resented in one of his *Zeitgedichte* (1816-1817), entitled "Bleibet im Lande," emigration to the New World, which was coming into full swing just at that time. He warns the emigrants to put the blame for their discontent not upon conditions but upon themselves, and reminds them of their duty not to leave the country at a time when their presence and patriotism were essential to the Fatherland's reconstruction and welfare:

<sup>144</sup> *Hauffs Werke*, V, 281-282.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 70.

Meinet ihr, draussen sei's besser auf Erden?  
 Überall ist es auf Erden jetzt schlimm.  
 Nicht an dem Land, dass es besser soll werden,  
 Liegt es; am Menschen, es liegt nur an ihm.  
 Zieheth in Gram nicht, in Unmut, von dannen,  
 Wendet der Heimat den Rücken nicht zu.  
 Will sich das Vaterland, soll sich's ermannen,  
 Wahrlich, bedarf es der Männer dazu.<sup>146</sup>

That Rückert, however, was not unmindful, as time went on, of America's tremendous development into a world power, is shown by his *Cristoforo Colombo oder die Entdeckung der Neuen Welt*, a historical drama in three parts, published in 1845. The first part reflects Columbus's plan and preparation for his voyage across the Atlantic, and, furthermore, the voyage itself, the landing of the navigators on the island of Guanahani, and the apprehension of the native Indians, who feel that their undisputed reign in their country has now come to an end. In the second and third part of the drama the poet points to the far-reaching consequences of the discovery of America. We are told of the vices which the Europeans brought to the New World, of the good nature and bravery of the aborigines, who soon saw themselves deceived and maltreated by the cruel Spaniards, and, finally, of the intrigues to which the dauntless discoverer became a victim. At the conclusion of the drama Queen Isabella of Spain turns Columbus's dying eyes from the desolate present to a glorious future:

Frei über der Zerstörung Graus  
 Erhebe deinen Blick!  
 In goldne Zukunft sieh hinaus;  
 Sieh deiner Welt Geschick!  
 Amerika, von Blut gedüngt,  
 Europa blüht daselbst verjüngt;  
 Die wilden Stämme welken hin

<sup>146</sup> Rückerts *Poetische Werke*, I, *Zeitgedichte*, p. 198.



Wie dein Pimentobaum,  
 Dem keine Pflege bringt Gewinn;  
 Für neu Gewächs wird Raum:  
 Sieh, freie Staaten wachsen da  
 Im blühenden Amerika.<sup>147</sup>

The same subject L. A. Frankl<sup>148</sup> treated earlier in his epic *Cristoforo Colombo*, in 1836. This work, in contrast to Rückert's dramatic scenes, is almost entirely reflective and is especially rich in lyric passages. In five sketches we become acquainted with Columbus's vision, mission, voyage, discovery, and death. Several monologues make us familiar with the inner life of the hero, for the purpose, as Werner says, "of presenting the difficulties which obstruct the way of every great idea."<sup>149</sup>

Ein Magus ist der Mensch, um den die Schranke  
 Die dunkle, ewige Natur gezogen,  
 Und draussen wogt sie mit allmächt'gem Wogen;  
 Tritt in das Reich der Taten der Gedanke,  
 Lockt's aus dem Haupte ihn, er ist verloren,  
 Und sei er göttlich auch in ihm geboren.<sup>150</sup>

At the end of the epic, before the audacious seafarer passes away, a vision shows him America once more, revealing to him that he will not have died in vain:

<sup>147</sup> Rückerts *Poetische Werke*, X, 647.

<sup>148</sup> Ludwig August Frankl (1810-1894), a German-Austrian poet, writer and philanthropist. He took part in the revolution of 1848, and his poems on liberty had considerable vogue. His lyrics are among his best works. He was secretary of the Jewish community in Vienna and did a lasting service to education by his visit to the Orient in 1856. He founded the first modern Jewish school in Jerusalem. His brilliant volumes *Nach Jerusalem*, describing his Eastern tour, have been translated into English, as is the case with many of his poems.

<sup>149</sup> R. M. Werner, *Deutsche Dichter u. Denker der Neuzeit*, p. 27.

<sup>150</sup> L. Aug. Frankl, *Gesammelte poet. Werke*, III, 150.

Hier lohnt Natur mit hundertfachem Segen,  
 Ein ew'ger Frühling scheint herabgesunken,  
 Es heben Städte sich mit stolzem Prunken,  
 Und Dome ragen in die Luft verwegen.  
 Und reich belad'ne Schiffe ruhn in Porten;  
 Die Kunst zieht ein durch ewig grüne Pforten.

. . .

Und grosse Geister werden einst hier walten,  
 Und herrschen wird das Recht, es herrscht der Weise,  
 Das Menschenrecht wird steigen hoch im Preise!  
 Der Ruhm, den sie dir neidend vorenthalten,  
 Er wird in später Zeit dir leuchtend werden:  
 Columbia preist ewig dich auf Erden.<sup>151</sup>

Frankl himself tells us that, one day in 1836, he recited his epic, just finished, in a distinguished circle of men of letters in Vienna. Among these Grillparzer listened with close attention and at the end of the recitation expressed his appreciation of the new epic. He did not fail, however, to mention, "das Gedicht sei zu lyrisch und die plastische Gestalt des Helden zu wenig episch aktuell."<sup>152</sup>

In concluding our chapter let us briefly review the presentation of America in German imaginative literature during the period of Romanticism. We have seen that in general the Romanticists were indifferent to the historical development of the United States as well as to contemporary conditions in the new nation. An intense yearning, however, resulting from discontent with the political and cultural situation in Europe, and stimulated in the twenties by the publication of Scott's, Irving's, and Cooper's novels in Germany, made the later writers of this period turn their eyes toward the shores of the New World. Thus, in process of time, America became to them a vision. They believed that on the virgin soil and in the primeval nature of the Western Hemisphere Providence had built

<sup>151</sup> L. Aug. Frankl, *Ges. poet. Werke*, III, 153.

<sup>152</sup> L. A. Frankl, *Zur Biographie Franz Grillparzers*, p. 4.

for mankind the home of liberty and future civilization. While in Prussia liberal-minded writers had to express their views more cautiously, it was in South Germany and especially in Switzerland that enthusiasm for America's liberal institutions was most loudly voiced. Eichendorff in the German novel and Zschokke in popular fiction were the first authors who pointed to the New World as the refuge for Europe's weary minds. The latter exalted the United States in such eloquent language and presented it in sketches of such romantic splendor as no other German novelist in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Romantic conception of America as a land of primitive nature and a refuge for the wearied minds of Europe has its source in descriptions and ideas which prevailed in French and English literature in the eighteenth century, as we have shown in the first chapter of our discussion. Indeed, such opinions as expressed by Platen, "Denn nach Westen flieht die Weltgeschichte," or Steffens's view that in America a new humanity would arise, can almost be traced verbatim to works of English poets, such as Berkeley and Goldsmith. Chamisso brought home from his tour around the world the fresh memories of his experiences in California. Elisabeth Kulmann drew brilliant sketches of America's exotic nature. Frankl and Rückert pointed in their epic and dramatic presentation of the discovery of the New World to the tremendous progress which the great Republic had made in their own day. This progress was followed with the keenest interest by the mastermind of Weimar. The Indian, finally, appears through the whole Romantic period (except in Goethe) as the uncivilized, but good-natured son of the wilderness who deserves our compassion as a victim of an advancing modern culture.

### CHAPTER III

#### TRAVEL LITERATURE

European travelers who visited America in the eighteenth century, chiefly for scientific purposes, were for the most part Frenchmen and Englishmen. The records of their travels were widely read, as we have seen, by the Germans also, and formed an important source of their knowledge of the New World. The Germans themselves, up to the second decade of the new century, had confined their travels mainly to European countries—in the first place to France, England, Switzerland, and Italy. More and more, in process of time, touring the Continent became a fashion in Germany. Not only were the heroes and heroines of many German novels, between 1790 and 1850, travelers, but a whole literature of travel sprang up, which for style and contents formed a valuable part of the imaginative literature of that period. Heine published the various volumes of his *Reisebilder* between 1826 and 1831 and Börne between 1830 and 1834 his *Briefe aus Paris*. Another traveler and writer noted for his originality was Fürst Pückler-Muskau, who between 1815 and 1837 toured, in succession, England, France, Northern Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece. In 1830 he published his *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*, which contains an interesting account of the author's sojourn in England and Ireland and was for a time the delight of the so-called "Elegante Welt." "Since Pückler," says Julian Schmidt, "the complete edition of every German writer contains a few volumes of Travels." "While in former years German literature was too



much confined to home affairs, it now almost ceased to be at home at all."<sup>1</sup>

In his *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* Pückler refers to America. He relates how a well-known eccentric character, Colonel C. in London, who in his youth had lost a considerable sum of money through gambling, decided to emigrate and become a settler in the forest wilderness of the New World. Thus he sold his last possessions and embarked with his servant to America. He selected a place in the midst of the Urwald near Lake Erie, where he built a log-house and exerted a wholesome influence upon the adventurers nearby. Soon he saw a new generation arise, while his own possessions increased until his land was almost as extensive as a small principality and his yearly income ten thousand pounds sterling. Every tenth year he would go for the season to England, where he lived as a well-bred gentleman. Then he would return to the American woods, "um den modernen Frack von neuem mit dem Schafpelz zu vertauschen."<sup>2</sup> In this account Pückler evidently intends to ridicule certain fantastic reports on America which were current in Europe in his time and which proclaimed the New World as a land of opportunity where it would be easy to become a millionaire.

From 1815 on, as discontent with the political and economic situation at home drove thousands from Europe across the sea, travels in the New World became almost a mania among the Germans. Everybody wanted to see that fairy-land of which he had read and heard such wondrous tales. The interest in America, which in the previous decades had manifested itself so keenly, began to bear practical results. Between 1815 and 1850 more than fifty books descriptive of travel were published by Germans who had either made extended visits to the United

<sup>1</sup> Julian Schmidt, *Portraits aus dem 19. Jahrh.*, II, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Pückler-Muskau, *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*, IV, 321.

States or had become citizens of the Republic. Many such travelers thought their views and experiences important enough to interest not only their relatives but other people too. Indeed, in the opinion of Julian Schmidt, in the thirties and forties, the common conversation in Germany, in the most remote forest hut as well as in the middle-class dwelling, centered about America. "The only book," he adds, "that in an inn could be seen in the hands of a farmer's man or gentleman, was a book about America."<sup>3</sup> Most of these descriptions, to be sure, have neither scientific nor literary value, they are significant only as records reflecting the spirit of the time when they appeared. Usually the travelers simply wanted to report what they saw or what attracted their special curiosity, without investigating further the real conditions of the new country. Often their views were considerably influenced by their preconceived ideas or by the experiences, either good or bad, which they had undergone while on their journey. The majority of these tourists present America in a more or less favorable light,<sup>4</sup> only a few voice their disappointment in terms of severe criticism.<sup>5</sup> The writers belong to all social and professional classes and to all parts of Germany. We find among them

<sup>3</sup> Julian Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von Leibniz bis auf unsere Zeit*, V, 271.

<sup>4</sup> Works, more or less favorable to American conditions, are: *Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nordamerika in den Jahren 1825 u. 1826* (publ. 1828).—Herzog Paul Wilhelm v. Württemberg, *Erste Reise nach dem nördl. Amerika in den Jahren 1822-1824* (1835).—Prinz Maximilian zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nordamerika in den Jahren 1832-1834* (1839).—G. Lotz, *Wanderungen eines jungen Norddeutschen durch Portugal, Spanien u. Nordamerika in den Jahren 1827-1831* (1834).—G. Duden (physician in Bonn), *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas in den Jahren 1824-1827* (1829).

<sup>5</sup> Unfavorable, in the main, are: Ludw. Gall (1791-1863, technician, lived in Kleve, Trier, Wetzlar, author of many books on the distillation of spirits), *Meine Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten im Frühjahr 1819 u. meine Rückkehr nach der Heirat im Winter 1820* (1822).—Fr. Höhne (coppersmith

princes<sup>6</sup> and statesmen,<sup>7</sup> scholars<sup>8</sup> and philanthropists,<sup>9</sup> clergymen<sup>10</sup> and physicians,<sup>11</sup> officers<sup>12</sup> and merchants,<sup>13</sup> scientists<sup>14</sup> and teachers,<sup>15</sup> farmers<sup>16</sup> and artisans.<sup>17</sup> They came from Württemberg<sup>18</sup> and Hanover,<sup>19</sup> from Northern Germany<sup>20</sup> and

in Weimar), *Wahn u. Überzeugung. Reise des Kupferschmiedemeisters Fr. Höhne über Bremen nach Nordamerika u. Texas in den Jahren 1839-1841* (1844). —W. Grisson (physician in Hamburg), *Beiträge zur Charakteristik der Ver. Staaten* (1844).

<sup>6</sup> See note 4.

<sup>7</sup> M. von Fürstenwärther (he came to America in 1817, to investigate the prospects of German emigration and to report on this question to Freiherr v. Gagern, minister of the Netherlands at the Deutscher Bundestag), *Der Deutsche in Amerika* (1818).

<sup>8</sup> Friedr. v. Raumer (professor of history at Berlin; he was in America in 1844), *Die Ver. Staaten v. Nordamerika* (1845).

<sup>9</sup> N. H. Julius (see note 37, chapter II), *Nordamerikas sittl. Zustände nach eigenen Anschauungen in den Jahren 1834, 1835 u. 1836* (1839).

<sup>10</sup> J. G. Büttner (clergyman in Wandsbeck, in the later years of his residence in America professor of theology at the German Reformed Theological Seminary in Ohio), *Die Ver. Staaten von Nordamerika. Mein Aufenthalt u. meine Reisen in denselben in den Jahren 1834-1841* (1844).

<sup>11</sup> Dr. W. Grisson (see note 5).—G. Duden (note 4).

<sup>12</sup> J. V. Hecke (retired army officer), *Reise durch die Ver. Staaten v. Nordamerika in den Jahren 1818 u. 1819* (1820).

<sup>13</sup> J. Ries (merchant in Berlin), *Schilderungen des Treibens im Leben u. Handel in den Ver. Staaten u. Havannah* (1840).

<sup>14</sup> Dr. A. E. Koch (scientist in Dresden), *Reise durch einen Teil der Ver. Staaten v. Nordamerika in den Jahren 1844-1846* (1847).

<sup>15</sup> T. W. Lenz (teacher in Schnepfental, Thuringia), *Reise nach St. Louis am Mississippi* etc. (1838).

<sup>16</sup> Ferd. Ernst (farmer of a crown-domain near Hildesheim), *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise durch das Innere der Ver. Staaten v. Nordamerika im Jahre 1819* (1820).

<sup>17</sup> Fr. Höhne (see note 5).

<sup>18</sup> *Nordamerika, oder neuestes Gemälde der nordam. Freistaaten, von einem Württemberger* (1818).

<sup>19</sup> See note 16.

<sup>20</sup> See note 9.

the Rhineland,<sup>21</sup> from Thuringia<sup>22</sup> and Switzerland.<sup>23</sup> They tell of the political and social life of the Americans, of their character, manners and customs, of religion and education, commerce and agriculture, of American landscapes and American cities. Tuckerman in his work *America and her Commentators* (1864) gives high credit to these reports, when he says: "A certain philosophical impartiality of tone makes the German records a kind of middle ground between the urbane and enthusiastic French and the prejudiced and sneering English writers. Some of the justest views and most candid delineations have emanated from German writers."<sup>24</sup>

The journals of the German princes, Duke Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg, the first member of a legitimate reigning European house to visit the United States, Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, and Prince Maximilian zu Wied,<sup>25</sup> are especially noteworthy among the German descriptions of travel in America on account of the wealth of material which they contain and the vigorous style in which they are couched. There is hardly any work in the English literature of travel in the early decades of the nineteenth century which for kindness of tone and comprehensiveness of detail can stand comparison with these friendly and comprehensive presentations of America.<sup>26</sup> While Duke Bernhard gives his impressions of general conditions in the United States, Maximilian zu Wied relates his exploration of the territories and Indian tribes of the upper Missouri and gives valuable information on almost all fields of physical and

<sup>21</sup> *Reise von Amsterdam nach Nordamerika u. Rückkehr über England, Schweden u. Ostpreussen etc., von einem Rheinländer* (1817).

<sup>22</sup> See note 17.

<sup>23</sup> J. J. Rütlinger, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise nach Nordamerika im Jahre 1823* (1826).

<sup>24</sup> Tuckerman, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>25</sup> See note 4.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. L. Mesick, *The English Traveller in America*.



natural science, his notes regarding the native flowers, birds, and reptiles being of special interest. Of the other writers Dr. Julius<sup>27</sup> was interested especially in the social life of the Americans and reported on the penal institutions in the country. Dr. Büttner<sup>28</sup> makes us acquainted with the educational problems and religious life of the German evangelical churches in America, while Raumer,<sup>29</sup> the German historian, gives a detailed account of American culture. A considerable number of reports, written especially for emigrants, contain advice and information about districts especially adapted for settlement and about agricultural and economic conditions in the Western States. Thus, Scherpf<sup>30</sup> gives interesting sketches of Texas, while Ziegler<sup>31</sup> presents the agricultural conditions in Wisconsin, and Weik praises the economic advantages of California.<sup>32</sup> A valuable contribution to the descriptive and travel literature on America was furnished by Francis Joseph Grund, the noted German-American diplomatist, in his two works entitled *Die Amerikaner in ihren moralischen, politischen und gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen* (1837) and *Die Aristokratie in Amerika. Aus dem Tagebuche eines deutschen Edelmannes* (1839).

Among the vast number of works of this kind there are only a few of importance for imaginative literature or in any way connected with it. It is to such publications that we shall now turn our special attention.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that Goethe in 1823

<sup>27</sup> See note 9.

<sup>28</sup> See note 10.

<sup>29</sup> See note 8.

<sup>30</sup> G. A. Scherpf (author otherwise unknown), *Entwicklungsgeschichte u. gegenwärtiger Zustand des neuen, unabhängigen Staates Texas* (1841).

<sup>31</sup> A. Ziegler (1822-1887, councillor of the court of Saxe-Weimar, traveler and writer of many works on geography), *Skizzen einer Reise durch Nordamerika u. Westindien* (1848).

<sup>32</sup> J. Weik (author otherwise unknown), *Californien, wie es ist* (1849).

read Gall's description of his travels in the United States and gained from it some very interesting suggestions for treating American material in an epic or drama. Gall's account *Meine Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten in Nordamerika im Frühjahr 1819 und meine Rückkehr nach der Heimat im Winter 1820* appeared in 1822 and was, after Bülow's book of travel, the first publication in the new century to present the darker sides of life in America.

In the preface and introduction of his work the writer announces his intention to describe in plain language how grievously he was disappointed on his journey. He points to the fact that the United States, often abused and more often excessively praised, is idealized by thousands of deluded Europeans as a Utopian republic, ruled by reason and philanthropy, in sharp contrast with the wretched conditions really existing in America. At first he himself had an ideal conception of the country, but was greatly disappointed when he knew the facts.

The first part of Gall's account contains a review of the motives which prompted his activities as a commissioner of emigration in Bonn and of the events leading up to his arrival in New York in 1819. In the second part the author records the impressions which he gained on his journey from New York to Harrisburg in Pennsylvania and his views of the American government and public life. He expresses his delight at the neat farm houses which dotted the Atlantic coast at the entrance of New York harbor and praises the fertility of Long Island's and New Jersey's coastal plains. The sight of America's great metropolis he calls unique, and Broadway the finest street in the world. Deeply impressed by the charming landscapes around New Brunswick and Philadelphia, he pictures them as an immense garden of nature, another "Eden." He draws a favorable picture also of the northwestern parts of Pennsylvania and the Miami River country, in Ohio.

The description of these beautiful landscapes, however, is offset by Gall's harsh criticism of the character of the American people. Again and again he entertains us with incidents where he thinks he was cheated by unscrupulous tavern-keepers and public officials, and it is from such experiences that he draws his conclusions in regard to the character of the American people. Furthermore, he mocks at the coolness, the unsociability and unkindness of the Americans. He is of the opinion that money-making is the sole object of their existence. The German-Americans fare no better with him. He finds fault with their frosty reserve and the indifference displayed toward their immigrant compatriots.

But it is against the intrigues of the political parties and the invectives of a corrupt press that the writer launches his most pointed shafts. On the other hand, he gives credit to the press for promoting public instruction in the country, and he must admit that "the Americans are about a century ahead of the Germans in the efficiency of training for practical life."<sup>32a</sup> In moral and economic conditions among the population the traveler finds only decay and wretchedness. "Polygamy," he says, "is so wide-spread among the people that one speaks of it only when it goes to the uttermost limits."<sup>33</sup> To prove his arguments concerning a general economic crisis in the country he adduces a number of excerpts from official reports. He derives this threatening calamity from financial speculation with foreign countries, an enterprise by which America had lost considerable money. In the Constitution of the United States Gall finds many defects, and he thinks that the Revolutionary War as well as the war of 1812 to 1814 was for the Americans only a matter of mercantile enterprise. His antipathy against the Republic reaches its climax when he says, "This vain and

<sup>32a</sup> Gall, *op. cit.*, II, 167.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

impotent mercenary government (Krämer-Regierung), dependent upon a selfish and narrow-minded people, has no energy at all."<sup>34</sup> Nothing would be more misleading, he thinks, than to expect in the United States a greater simplicity of manners and a better people than in Europe, or a form of government more appropriate to the purposes of social life. The constitution which is in effect in the Union would benefit only an enlightened people. It would be entirely preposterous simply to infer the prosperity of a country from the multitude of its population. In America the worth of a man depends only upon the size of his pocket-book. Many immigrants are home-sick, especially among the educated classes.

Gall's unfavorable reports incurred, of course, the sharpest criticism from those who had a better knowledge of the actual conditions in the country. Rattermann, the well-informed German-American writer, calls Gall's description a caricature of America and sees simply a misrepresentation in an attempt to impute to the Americans as a people the general character of dishonesty and immorality. He points out that immigrants are always and everywhere cheated, and in Europe more than in America.<sup>35</sup> Rattermann's views were anticipated by a contemporary critic of Gall. Rütlinger,<sup>36</sup> a native of Switzerland who visited America in 1823, became convinced that Gall hardly ever left his residence in Harrisburg and derived his gloomy conception of the United States for the most part from English sources.

But in spite of the fact that Gall's accounts contain much adverse and, no doubt, often unjust criticism of conditions in America, it cannot be denied that his work is an important contribution to the history of American culture and of trans

<sup>34</sup> Gall, *op. cit.*, II, 309.

<sup>35</sup> H. A. Rattermann, *Der deutsche Pionier*, 1881, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> See note 23.



atlantic emigration in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. Moreover, his story of his travels in America was the first work of its kind which Goethe ever read. In view of the latter's peculiar genius it was not surprising that Gall's descriptions of his experiences and of conditions in the United States should have fired Germany's greatest poet with the idea of a great literary production which would present German emigrants under a qualified leader crossing the Atlantic and settling on the virgin soil of the Western Republic.

Zschokke's interest in America was so great that although he never stepped on the shores of the New World, he nevertheless undertook the writing of a description of travels in the United States, for which a native of Switzerland, Suchard von Neuenburg, furnished the material. The title of the volume, published in 1827 by Sauerländer in Aarau, is *S.v.N., Mein Besuch Amerikas im Sommer 1824. Ein Flug durch die Vereinststaaten Maryland, Pennsylvanien, New York zum Niagarafall, und durch die Staaten Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky und Virginien zurück*. The *Literaturblatt* of Cotta's *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, in 1837 called attention to the strange similarity of style prevailing in this work and the works of Zschokke, and guessed correctly the authorship of the German-Swiss writer.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Zschokke's enthusiasm for American liberal institutions, his hope of a great future for the Republic, and his sympathy with the aborigines manifest themselves throughout the book. "There is spread through all classes in American cities a certain moral independence, a sense for decency and nobleness, which has been neither drilled into the people nor imitated from others, but has its origin in the consciousness of right and in the respect for other people's convictions."<sup>38</sup> A kindly, noble hospitality is the most conspicuous virtue

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte d. deutschen Dichtung*, X, 95.

<sup>38</sup> S. v. N., *op. cit.*, p. 82.

in American life. Everywhere an intense interest in universal education is noticeable, and the American government does not regard expenses in promoting public instruction. The writer takes a rosy view of the future of the Republic. "One quarter of a century more, and the United States through its geographical location, population, wealth, splendid system of instruction, and wise legislation will become a gigantic power, mighty enough to defy all Europe and to influence the Old World more than it is itself influenced by the latter."<sup>39</sup> Zschokke's fondness for idealizing primitive conditions of life appears in the following passage: "The genuine liberty of the savages has a peculiar charm, resulting from simplicity, righteousness, and an absolute freedom from care. It has hardly ever occurred that Indians, brought up under the influence of European culture, were not desirous of returning to their quiet, free wilderness and the simple manners of their fellow-tribesmen. But there are several examples illustrating the fact that educated Europeans who came in touch with the aborigines and for some time lived among them have felt so happy in the company of the Indians that they never longed for their former state of civilization."<sup>40</sup>

Of the journals which the three German princes published after their return from America, the two volumes by the son of Karl August of Saxe-Weimar attract our special attention through the fact that they were thoughtfully read and very favorably commented upon by Goethe. These volumes, originally intended only as a diary notebook for the use of relatives and friends, were edited in 1828 by Counsellor Luden and published as *Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nordamerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826*. This comprehensive work of about six hundred pages acquires an additional value through a large number of maps,

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>40</sup> S. v. N., *op. cit.*, p. 137.

charts, vignettes, and sketches, collected or drawn by Bernhard and members of his party.

In the preface Duke Bernhard tells us that the idea of visiting America had occupied his mind almost from his earliest years, and he adds: "The more I became acquainted with the Old World, the more my desire to see the New World increased." His American visit lasted from June 26, 1825 to June 16, 1826. During this time he toured almost all the Eastern States, extending his travels to Quebec in the North and to New Orleans in the South, and as his high rank admitted him without question to all places and circles of importance, he recorded in his journal a multitude of interesting facts concerning the country and its inhabitants. He was welcomed on his journey by American leaders in public life, but he felt just as happy in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of the Herrnhuter and Harmonists. At the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia he attended the ceremonies commemorating the landing of William Penn in America in 1683 and listened to the public oration of Dr. Charles Ingersoll.<sup>41</sup> In Washington he was a guest at a dinner party given by President John Quincy Adams to the diplomatic corps. He records the deep impression which the personality of the sixth President of the United States made upon him, in these words: "He is a man about sixty years old, of rather short stature, with a bald head and of a very plain and dignified appearance. He speaks little, but what he says is to the purpose. I must confess that I have seldom in my life felt so true and sincere a reverence as at the moment when the honorable gentleman, whom eleven millions of people have thought worthy to elect as their chief magistrate, shook hands with me."<sup>42</sup> The Duke was particularly interested in the mili-

<sup>41</sup> U. S. district attorney for the eastern district of Pennsylvania.

<sup>42</sup> *Travels through North America during the years 1825 and 1826 by his Highness Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach* (Philadelphia, 1828), I, 157.

tary, technical, and physical conditions of the country. He gives a detailed account of West Point Military Academy and notes, "The young men are very well trained, and I was pleased with the good order which prevailed." In attractive sketches the writer describes the Battery and the fortifications, museums, and societies in New York, the Navy Yard in Brooklyn, the handsome private residences along the Hudson, and the beautiful panorama seen from Monticello in Virginia. We accompany him on his trip up the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis and his visit to the industrial center at Pittsburgh, the "American Birmingham." Niagara Falls has been depicted by many writers; it may be of interest to note how it impressed the mind of Karl August's son: "Our steps were guided by the mighty roaring of the Falls. In a few moments we stood near the precipice, and saw before us the immense mass of water which rushes with a tremendous noise into the frightful abyss below. It is impossible to describe the scene, and the pen is too feeble to delineate the simultaneous feelings of insignificance and grandeur which agitate the human breast at the sight of this stupendous work of nature. We can only gaze, admire, and adore."<sup>43</sup>

The observant prince praises the United States as a "happy and prosperous country." Tactfully he refrains from criticizing the conditions which he found, as he felt that the hospitality which he enjoyed in the Republic obligated him to a certain reserve in expressing his personal views.

We can understand that the Americans were greatly pleased with the Duke's account. Critics called it the best work written on America by a German, and Philadelphia publishers issued a special edition in English.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the wealth of material and the elegance of style which mark this work, and above all, the

<sup>43</sup> *Travels through North America* etc., I, 75.

<sup>44</sup> See note 42.



royal blood of the traveler with his cordial interest in all that he saw and heard make Duke Bernhard's account for all time a landmark in the history of the literature of travel in America.

Seldom has a book of travels caused a greater sensation and certainly none had a more misleading influence on emigration to America than Gottfried Duden's *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas und einen mehrjährigen Aufenthalt am Missouri (1824-1827), oder Das Leben im Innern der Vereinigten Staaten und dessen Bedeutung für die häusliche und politische Lage der Europäer*. The contents of this work, published in 1829, consist of a series of letters dealing with Duden's sea-voyage, landing, and journeys in America, a special treatise on political conditions in the United States, and an appendix giving advice and information to German peasants who intended to emigrate to the New World. The author was aroused, he declares, by misleading reports which presented America in an unfavorable light. "At the time of the French liberty humbug (Freiheitsschwindel) the admiration for America knew no limits, now the other extreme is very common."<sup>45</sup> In describing his sojourn in the United States the writer wants to vindicate the Americans in the face of the prejudices to which they are exposed in Europe, and preludes in the introduction the graphic description which his readers have to expect. "After half a century a new history of the world has begun in America, a history of liberty and of great ideas. Millions find in the beautiful plains and valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi an abundance of space and a region waiting for settlers and cultivators."

After a journey through Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, Duden took up his residence in Montgomery county, Missouri. Partly in a didactic style and partly in passages of romantic vividness he sets forth

<sup>45</sup> Duden, *op.cit.*, Einleitung, p.vii.

to his compatriots the independent life of the settlers in the virgin forests of Missouri, contrasting it with the very unfavorable economic, political, and social conditions in the Fatherland. With glowing colors he depicts the beauty of the American forest in the month of May. The fear of forest-fires and rattle-snakes he considers absolutely unfounded and calls a gross exaggeration the report that there are no real song-birds in America. A striking example of his almost poetic gift for presenting natural scenery is the following passage: "At the foot of the mountains we entered the forests, and there we were at once surrounded by the sparkle of myriads of fireflies which made the light of the nocturnal sky entirely superfluous. At the same time a kind of locust caused such a buzzing that for a whole hour we could speak to each other only in a strained voice. From time to time the howling of panthers, wolves, and foxes and the screeching of many night-birds rose above the general noise. These impressions were intensified by the changing views of the depths lying in front of us and beside us which reflected the light of the moon and of the stars in the most manifold shades."<sup>46</sup>

Duden also presents the general conditions in America in a very favorable light. From personal experience he contradicts the opinion of many Europeans that religious liberty leads to religious indifference. Beggars and public vice, he asserts, are almost unknown in the country, and covetousness is not worse there than in Europe. In regard to the slave question the traveler has very mild views and speaks for the slave-holders. Higher education of the masses is on the same level in the United States as in any country in the Old World. Whosoever comes to America anxious for work and success will surely find his job. Duden ascribes the political greatness and happiness of the Americans to the natural resources of

<sup>46</sup> Duden, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

their country. "The great fertility of the soil, its vast expansion, the mild climate, splendid waterways, communication entirely unrestricted within a space of several thousand miles, and perfect security of person and property besides very small public taxes—these are the facts which have to be regarded as the main pillars of prosperity in America."<sup>47</sup> It is, however, significant that Duden opposes the traditional Romantic conception of the aborigines as good-hearted people. "In general nothing is more one-sided than the bombastic declamation against the spread of the Europeans joined with sentimental laudation of the Indians."<sup>48</sup>

At the time when Duden's account of his travels appeared, and for decades later, his highly colored presentation of conditions in America made a tremendous impression upon public opinion in Germany. Its influence on German emigration was so intense that Gustav Koerner, the noted German-American diplomatist, who came to the United States in 1833, felt called upon to give out a true statement of the facts. He published in 1834 a treatise entitled *Beleuchtung des Dudenschen Berichtes über die westlichen Staaten* and said in the introduction: "Among the great number of German publications dealing with emigration and settlement in the United States in the earlier decades of the century, no other work has so strangely influenced particularly the educated classes in Germany as Duden's *Bericht über eine Reise* etc. In many families it was read day by day on the eve of embarking for the New World, and became an authoritative source for their information."<sup>49</sup> Koerner is of the opinion that Duden's reports paint in too vivid colors those regions and conditions in America to which the emigrants are setting forth, and that the author, inspired

<sup>47</sup> Duden, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *D. A. Geschichtsblätter*, 1916, pp. 280-333.

by his love of the new soil where he lived, saw everything in too rosy a light. These brilliant descriptions of primitive life in America's forests were instrumental also in developing Lenau's plan of a visit to the New World. The poet recommended the reading of Duden's travels to his relatives in Vienna, if they wanted to trace his journey.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, as Bischoff notes, "Lenau borrowed not only his general views on America from Duden, but also all the details of his descriptions in the letters of that time. Even his poems were influenced by Duden."<sup>51</sup>

Finally, when the number of emigrants considerably increased and a knowledge of the real conditions of the country aroused more and more violent criticism of Duden's fantastic reports, the author himself became somewhat alarmed. He published in 1837 a polemic treatise *Die nordamerikanische Demokratie und das von Tocqueville'sche Werk darüber als Zeichen des Zustandes der theoretischen Politik*<sup>52</sup> and added to it an appendix entitled "Selbstanklage wegen seines amerikanischen Reiseberichtes zur Warnung vor fernern leichtsinnigen Auswandern." In this pamphlet Duden regrets that so many who through his favorable account were influenced to emigrate to the United States later felt disappointed when they saw the real conditions

<sup>50</sup> A. X. Schurz, *Lenaus Leben*, I, 163 (Brief an Schurz, Heidelberg, 16. März 1832).

<sup>51</sup> H. Bischoff, *Nik. Lenaus Lyrik*, p. 260.

<sup>52</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), the French statesman and writer, visited America in 1831 and published in 1835 the first volumes of his celebrated work *La Démocratie en Amérique*, which was the first systematic analysis of America's democracy and attracted universal interest, especially in France, England, and America. Cf. Felix Boh, *Eine Untersuchung über das Wesen der Demokratie in den Ver. Staaten Nordamerikas mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Alexis de Tocqueville's*.—H. Jaques, *Alexis de Tocqueville, Ein Lebens- u. Geistesbild*. Jaques discusses (p. 26 ff.) the reasons why Tocqueville's work has not found in Germany the same appreciation as in England, France, and America.



of the new country, and laid the blame for exaggeration and high coloring on him and his book. He insists that the responsibility for all this rested not on him but on a misunderstanding of his statements, and differs sharply with those writers who made America the object of senseless attacks.

The German descriptions of travel in America are significant, as we have seen, only as recording the experiences of the tourists and their personal views concerning various phases of American life and character. While some of these accounts attracted the special interest of certain writers, as Goethe and Lenau, they had as a whole, undoubtedly, an important influence on the entire imaginative literature on America in the first half of the nineteenth century. They were an important source of information, particularly for the poets and novelists of the German emigration literature, as will be seen in a later chapter of our discussion.

## CHAPTER IV

### ETHNOGRAPHICAL NOVELS

In the first chapter of his monograph on Friedrich Armand Strubberg, Barba gives a brief survey of the history of the German ethnographical novel down to the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> He points to the various influences which contributed to the appearance of these novels, such as the works of Chateaubriand, Scott, and Cooper, and the longing for foreign countries which drove the Germans across the sea. Charles Sealsfield, the German-American writer, may be regarded as the creator of the German transatlantic ethnographical novel. He was the first German author to portray for his compatriots in the framework of fiction the characteristic features of the young Republic and make real to them the heroic spirit of a nation in the making.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *German-American Annals*, N. S., X (1911).

<sup>2</sup> Recently (1922) B. A. Uhlendorf has published a valuable treatise on *Ethnic Elements and National Problems in the Works of Charles Sealsfield*, where he discusses Sealsfield's presentation of political, economic, social, and ethnic conditions in America. In the introduction to his work the author gives a bibliography of the Sealsfield literature and treats the relation of the German-American novelist to the contemporary cultural life of Germany. In view of this publication we shall have to restrict our discussion of the novelist's presentation of America to a broad outline. For a more adequate view of Sealsfield's views of America and their influence on German opinion, the material drawn from his novels has been supplemented by expressions of similar tendency taken from his descriptive work. All of his views on American life are marked by the same tendencies and form one body of thought.—An important literary study, *Charles Sealsfield*, by Emil Soffé, published in 1922 after the author's death by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wissenschaft u. Kunst in

Karl Postl, who after his emigration to America took the pen-name of Charles Sealsfield,<sup>3</sup> was born in 1793 at Poppitz in Moravia. At an early age he entered the Kreuzherrnorden in Prague and was ordained to the priesthood. In 1822 he fled to the United States, probably for political reasons. The first years he spent here were from 1823 to 1826. He then went to Germany, but returned to America in the following year (1827) and stayed here until 1831. In 1832, after a sojourn in England and France, he took up his residence in Switzerland, but visited America for a short time in the year 1837 and again in 1850, and for a longer stay from 1853 to 1858. He died on his estate "Unter den Tannen," near Solothurn, in 1864.

During his various sojourns in America Sealsfield traveled extensively through the Southern and Southwestern States (1823-1825, 1829, 1855-1856) and visited Mexico (1828-1829). He was for a brief period (1829-1830) editor of the *Courrier des États-Unis* in New York. His favorite residence was in Kittanning, Pa. For a time he lived in Philadelphia as correspondent for Cotta's German journals. He bought a plantation on the Red River, in Arkansas, but was unable to maintain it on account of insolvency of his banker. His academic associations in his native land,<sup>4</sup> and his sympathy with the liberal political views of Young Germany, together with his experiences in the Western Hemisphere as a traveler, planter, and writer, including intercourse with influential representatives of American culture, all qualified him particularly to portray the national characteristics of the New World.

He professed a liking for the historical novel and depicted

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Brünn, attempts to throw light upon the personality of the "Grosse Unbekannte."

<sup>3</sup> This name appears for the first time as a signature of a letter to Cotta on Sept. 26, 1826. Cf. Faust, *Charles Sealsfield, der Dichter beider Hemisphären*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Soffé, *Charles Sealsfield*, p. 9.

conditions in America with such realism that his works show decided progress in the technique of description as compared with the sentimental novels of the Romanticists. Almost all of Sealsfield's works are written in German. While his English is rather defective, his German style has been influenced by his English linguistic feeling. This style is based on well conceived principles. We find therein Anglo-American and English words and phrases retained without modification; besides, the different heroes of the novels are characterized by their individual mode of expression. By this the author wanted "to accustom the German readers to the utterances of the Great Republic."<sup>5</sup> The translations of Sealsfield's works are for the most part not his own and, as a rule, inferior to the original. His works were first published in Germany, with the exception of his Indian tale, which first appeared in America. His impressions of America are entirely original since a consensus of German-American cultured opinion did not exist at that time.

The first work published by Sealsfield, in 1827 (Cotta, Stuttgart und Tübingen), is descriptive, and is entitled: *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika nach ihrem politischen, religiösen und geschichtlichen Verhältnisse betrachtet. Mit einer Reise durch den westlichen Teil von Pennsylvanien, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, das Gebiet Arkansas, Mississippi und Louisiana. Von C. Sidons.*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Faust, *Charles Sealsfield, Materials for a Biography*, etc., chapter II.

<sup>6</sup> A pen-name only here used.—When these two volumes appeared, a critic in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* (June 20, 1827) wrote: "This work is by a writer who is very well acquainted with the conditions, the life and events in the United States, and who, with German-American fairness, depicts both the brighter and darker sides of his new country in a manner which bears all the marks of intrinsic truth. This work may be called a key that unlocks for us political and private life in the United States and gives us thorough and well weighed information about its nature and conditions. It is the calm and dispassionate tone of the discussion which makes the author's work particularly attractive."



In the first volume the author gives a survey of the political situation in the United States in 1824, discussing especially the Presidential election of that year and presenting in detail the characters of the candidates and of the new members of the Cabinet. Furthermore, he treats the various economic and social aspects of America, with notes on literature, education and religion, city life and country life, the militia, the merchant, the lawyer, and the physician. In the second volume the writer describes his tour through the Southwestern States of America (1825-1826). He gives a detailed account of these States, discussing the physical condition of the soil, the character of the population, educational and religious life, products, trade and commerce, and public health, adding an account of the more important cities and towns of each state.<sup>7</sup>

Aside from this, all the works on America which Sealsfield wrote are novels. In 1828 he published anonymously in English an Indian tale, *Tokeah, or the White Rose*, which, in 1833, after his settlement in Switzerland, appeared in an enlarged German version as *Der Legitime und die Republikaner; eine Geschichte aus dem letzten amerikanisch-englischen Kriege* (1812-1815). In dramatic scenes and fascinating characterizations the author here presents the sharp conflict between the irresistible progress of civilization beyond the Mississippi and the ardent love with which the aborigines cling to the soil of their ancestors. Even more than the story of the novel, its characters attract our attention: the American backwoodsman Squire Copeland; the English midshipman; the French pirate Lafitte; Tokeah,

<sup>7</sup> The value of Sealsfield's work was also recognized at once in England and America, as an English version, produced by the author himself, appeared the following year (vol. I: *The United States of America as they are in their Political, Religious and Social Relations*, London, Murray; vol. II: *The Americans as they are, Described in a Tour through the Valley of the Mississippi*, London, Hurst & Co.).

the gallant chieftain of the Oconeas; Canondah, the generous Indian girl; and the tender figure of the White Rose—all pass before us in the vivid colors of actual life. Although much more realistic than Chateaubriand's and Cooper's savages, the Indians of Sealsfield are still surrounded with the halo of Romantic idealism. In the stirring lamentation with which they protest against the onward course of the American settlers, the author makes himself an advocate of their dying cause. On the other hand, the words which the American general addresses to Tokeah indicate that the writer comprehends the exigencies of the new times: "The fate of the red men is hard in many respects, but it is not inevitable; barbarism always has to yield in the fight against enlightenment, as night has to yield to day; you have, however, the means at hand to join this enlightenment and to enter into our civilian life. If you do not want this, and if you prefer to be wild savages (Legitime) instead of respected citizens, then you must not quarrel with fate, which throws you away like toys, after you have run through your nocturnal course (nächtliche Bahn)."<sup>8</sup>

In two novels our author depicts life on a Mexican background, *Der Virey und die Aristokratie* (1835) and *Süden und Norden*<sup>9</sup> (1842). Here the plots are interwoven with historical and cultural themes and lead the reader into the splendors of the tropical world.

The remaining novels deal exclusively with life and conditions in the United States. In 1835 the author published his *Transatlantische Reiseskizzen oder Lebensbilder aus beiden Hemisphären*,<sup>10</sup> which contain the novels *George Howards Brautfahrt*,

<sup>8</sup> *Der Legitime u. die Republikaner*, III, 281.

<sup>9</sup> Translated into English by Headley (1844): *North and South ; or Scenes and Adventures in Mexico*.

<sup>10</sup> Translated into English by Hebbe and Mackay (1844): *Life in the New World, or Sketches of American Society*.

*Ralph Doughbys Brautfahrt, Pflanzeleben und die Farbigen*, and *Nathan, der Squatter-Regulator oder der erste Ansiedler in Texas*. In the same year appeared *Morton oder die grosse Tour*, wherein the author develops his views on American financial activity and enterprise, and European intrigue and diplomacy, on money as a world-power and aristocracy as a hated institution. Finally, the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften*<sup>11</sup> (1839) contains interesting scenes from New York's social life in 1836, and the *Kajütenbuch oder Nationale Charakteristiken*<sup>12</sup> (1841) presents the struggle of the Texans for independence from Mexico.

In all these novels, though he wrote them after he had returned to Europe,<sup>13</sup> Sealsfield appears as a close observer of conditions in the New World. It is not so much the plot of the stories that attracts our interest, but rather the wealth of historical and cultural material which they contain, and the enthusiasm and broadmindedness with which this material is discussed. Above all, the author glorifies the well-nigh superhuman achievements of the pioneers who conquer the wilderness for civilization. With historical accuracy and thoroughness he records political events. In all, he has not only a keen eye for the national characteristics of the Americans, but also an unusual perceptive faculty, a fairness of judgment, a talent for realistic presentation, and a rich gift for dramatic characterization. Again and again we are struck by the marked originality of his views and by his splendid description of America's grandiose scenery. Sealsfield is imbued with a glowing love and

<sup>11</sup> An English translation by Taylor appeared in New York in 1845: *Rambleton, a Romance of Fashionable Life in New York during the Great Speculation in 1836*.

<sup>12</sup> *The Cabin Book, or National Characteristics* (translated from the German by Powell, London, 1852).

<sup>13</sup> From 1835 to 1837 Sealsfield lived in Zürich, then at other places in Switzerland, as Tägernweilen, Brugg, Feuerthalen.

admiration for the fundamental principles of American government and for the sublime mission of the Union. While his enthusiasm at times runs away with him, nevertheless he is far from blind to defects in the social and political life of the Republic.<sup>14</sup>

Sealsfield shows his creative power, in the first place, in drawing various types of American character, such as existed in the first decades of the nineteenth century. We find in his novels the Yankee with his furrowed brow and cold gloomy eyes; the Virginian, whose heart is in the right place; and the jovial, often inconsiderate and even boisterous Kentuckian.<sup>15</sup> We meet the American Indian in his fierce struggle with civilization, the enterprising settler and backwoodsman, who builds his lonely hut in the virgin forests of Louisiana, and the German immigrant, who brought thrift and religious devotion from the Fatherland, but likes too well to isolate himself from his Anglo-American fellow-citizens. The author delights in bringing before us the trappers, these rough characters, "with a self-confidence that shrinks from no danger, and with a sharpness of sight and correctness of judgment of which man in civilized society can form no just idea. Their hunting-knife is their God, their rifle is their patron saint, and their hardy feet are their only trust."<sup>16</sup> In the *Pflanzerleben* we see the wealthy Southern planter and hear of his happy domestic life, his prosperous plantations, and the patriarchal relations between master and servant. It is here that the author makes the characters of the novel discuss the difficult slavery question, which in his time had begun to concern the minds of all Americans. He treats the history of slavery in the country from its beginnings and gives a realistic description of the life of the

<sup>14</sup> See Uhlendorf, *Charles Sealsfield, Ethnic Elements* etc., chap. V.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Pflanzerleben*, I, 281 ff.

<sup>16</sup> *George Howards Brautfahrt*, I, 197 ff.



negro on the plantation. Moreover, he points out that the sense of justice, so characteristic of the Southerners, has considerably improved the condition of the slave, and he also is fair enough to remind us of the evil qualities of the negroes, such as malice, cruelty, thirst for revenge, and savage pleasure in the suffering of others. Although he condemns slavery decidedly and fundamentally, he states that a brutal race, a race brought among us without our consent, cannot be civilized in a few years nor be taught in so short a space of time to bear the responsibilities of liberty. "Years, nay centuries can alone achieve that end. First learn the character of the slave, and then speak."<sup>17</sup>

In brilliant sketches he unrolls before us the characteristic features of many American States and cities. In *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* we hear of the amazing changes which civilization has wrought in the swamps and wildernesses of Louisiana. The heroic struggle of Texas against Mexico is the background of the story in the *Kajütenbuch*. The author is particularly familiar with conditions in Pennsylvania: hardly a more enthusiastic panegyric has ever been written in praise of the Keystone State than the fifth chapter of *Morton oder die grosse Tour*. On his journey with Morton, Colonel Isling points to the beautiful landscape which they traverse, extending from Harrisburg toward Philadelphia, and calls it "the garden of Pennsylvania," a land of free citizens, which has been developed and cultivated without the slightest pressure from above. "There are no castles and towers, the battlements of which would proudly glitter far into the country, but, on the other hand, no huts moaning under the protection of their masters, not even the mocking country-house of the stiff, pious Yankee, who in his heart thanks God that he is not like his Southern neighbor; there are simply inhabited estates,

<sup>17</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 143. Cf. also *Pflanzerleben*, II, chap. IV.

which, forged together in thousands and hundred thousands, like links of an endless chain, please our eyes the more as they are separated by fields, meadows, and frequently by wood-lots, resembling, thus, an immense park in which hundreds of thousands of people enjoy their life."<sup>18</sup> In contrast with this "triumphal avenue" (Triumphstrasse), leading through Pennsylvania and built by free citizens, Colonel Isling sketches the conditions which prevailed in the State in the years after the Revolutionary War. "Everything was forest and nothing else but forest; only here and there a bright spot, that is to say, a few hundred of girdled oak trunks which stood around, bare and withered, with a few bushels of wheat and corn planted between."<sup>19</sup>

In the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften* the author takes us to New York. The entrance into the harbor evidently left an indelible impression upon him. He describes the first sight of the great metropolis in vivid sentences: "You feel that you are entering upon no ordinary scene. The green slopes and abrupt promontories strike you as the embodiment of grandeur and beauty. On the right the East River curves away like the arm of some mighty sea-god, dropped from the northeast; to the left, the beautiful Hudson stretches away for hundreds of miles into the bosom of the north; in the south, the narrow and naturally fortified outlet to the ocean; and in the midst of these beauties of land and water New York rises from the waves. Sixty years ago the ground was occupied by a handful of miserable huts, the residences of a few lazy Dutchmen. Now you behold the second commercial capital in the world; a picture of national prosperity and enterprise unsurpassed in the history of the last six thousand years.—Now the city appears in full view, in all her might and beauty. Before you the dismantled

<sup>18</sup> *Morton oder die grosse Tour*, I, 116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

fort of Castle Garden, with the superb Battery, on the north and east of which pass hundreds of vessels, and in the rear of their pennoned masts a wilderness, a chaos of houses and stores, above which tower domes, cupolas and steeples."<sup>20</sup>

In *George Howards Brautfahrt* the New Yorkers are characterized as a "sanguine, pushing people, who live and let live, acquire gold by the peck and spend it by the bushel. They will not let a man come to himself. Even the calculating Yankeeism of Boston, and the Quakerism of Philadelphia change here, and one would think that whole continents lay between the flat, plain, quiet Quaker city,—where watchmen have to wear sheep-skin soles to their shoes, lest they should disturb the slumber of the dear citizens and their still dearer wives,—and merry bustling, noisy New York."<sup>21</sup>

In all his novels Sealsfield appears as a master in the art of depicting American landscapes. Faust calls attention to the fact that the writer has evidently been influenced by Scott, Cooper, and Irving<sup>22</sup>; he must also have known Chateaubriand's work, which he, however, surpasses through the realism of his descriptions.<sup>23</sup> It is particularly the grandeur, the vastness of nature in America in contrast with nature in Europe, and especially in Germany, which our author presents and which calls forth our admiration. With the pencil of a master he draws brilliant sketches of the "forest primeval" in the Mississippi valley and of the prairie of the Jacinto, of the hurricane and the forest-fire, of the beautiful plantations in Louisiana and the "Southern cross" in Mexico. Surely, it was a revelation for German readers, tired of the weird fancies of Tieck or E.

<sup>20</sup> *Rambleton, a Romance* etc., pp. 84 ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Faust, "Sealsfield's Place in Literature" (*Americana Germanica*, I, 1897).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Uhlendorf, *Charles Sealsfield, Ethnic Elements* etc., Introduction, p. 16. Also: Schulz, *Die Schilderung exotischer Natur* etc., pp. 42-43.

T. A. Hoffmann, when they read such eloquent passages as that which paints the dawn as seen from a Southern plantation: "A splendid morning! Myriads of stars fade from the dark-blue heavenly dome, which now reddens in the east; and the lofty magnolias on the opposite shore sparkle like royal crowns! Strange ideas often cross my mind; our Louisiana is still half chaotic, yet how wonderful a land! The mysterious dawn, bursting forth into the glory of the daylight,—the wonderful swan-song at a distance, overpowering in its rich harmony,—the shrill sound of the water-fowls,—a few silver-toned notes from the king of all songsters, the nonpareil,—the increasing chattering of the paroquets and the awakening picaninies, girls and women, increasing like the murmuring of the waves! While you are listening to the various sounds, and the strains of God's invigorated creation fill your soul with gratitude and praise; a stream of light, nearly blinding your eyes by its rapid appearance, calls to your mind the fiat of the Almighty: 'Let there be light!' With this phenomenon commences the daily bustle and uproar."<sup>23a</sup> In another passage Sealsfield praises the Hudson, comparing it with European rivers, like the Rhine and the Loire, and, enraptured with the beauty of autumn, adorning the mountains and valleys along the banks of the mighty river, he exclaims: "O Indian summer! Indian summer! Thou summer breathing fragrance,—thou poesy of the seasons! How mild are thy zephyrs! how sweet thy breath! how delicate, pure and golden thy ether! O Indian summer! Leave me my Indian summer!"<sup>24</sup>

Remembering how much he himself owed to the New World, the author frequently points out the enchanting, wholesome influence which this grandiose scenery of America has upon the character of man, especially of the immigrant. "On moving

<sup>23a</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 138.

<sup>24</sup> *Rambleton*, etc., p. 205.



over these immense uninhabited tracts, the deep silence interrupted only at intervals by a herd of prairie dogs, or wolves, —something like awe creeps over you; the magnitude and immensity of nature fill your senses and your entire being; the movements of your fellow-men and yourselves appear small, trifling, and contemptible; an indescribable awe, a secret shudder seizes on the solitary wanderer, as he proceeds on and on for days! In such days and hours, the omnipotence of the Creator penetrates your innermost soul, perhaps hardened and petrified by the cares of life.”<sup>25</sup> A similar idea is expressed by Colonel Morse in the *Kajütenbuch*, when he says, “I have won, I may say, a new living God, for my former God was the God of my preacher; the one which I have found in the prairie is my personal God, my creator who reveals himself in the glory of his works.”<sup>26</sup>

With unreserved admiration Sealsfield viewed the tremendous achievements of the American people in the colonization of their country. He likes to compare the past and the present of the Republic and calls our attention to the astonishing fact that the United States, sixty years ago an out-of-the-way corner of the earth, inhabited by a few hundred thousand families of poor colonists, has developed within that period into an empire which has become the pride of mankind.<sup>27</sup> The author frequently toured the Southern States. On these occasions such thoughts may have occurred to him as were expressed by a traveler in the *Pflanzerleben*, who relates: “It is charming to me to view the development of our country in its various phases, and to consider the abyss between the past and the present. Thus, I have seen the settlements, the plantations which we are approaching, exclusively inhabited by

<sup>25</sup> *Life in the New World*, pp. 188 ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Kajütenbuch*, p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 68.

Creoles, and in as poor a state of cultivation as can be imagined. It seemed a cursed spot, on which work would be utterly useless and the community doomed to starvation. But a few dozen Americans have arrived, and they have already raised the character of the land."<sup>28</sup> Max Diez justly points to the important place which Sealsfield occupies in German literature as the first historian of the cultural development of America in the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Of historical events in the history of the United States Sealsfield dwells especially on the Revolutionary War, the purchase of Louisiana, the War of 1812, and Texas's war for independence. In *Morton oder die grosse Tour* Colonel Isling tells of his career as a Hessian, and later under Putnam, Lee, and Greene, furthermore of the privations of the American army, of Washington's generosity and nobility, of Lafayette, De Kalb, and of Steuben's financial liberality. "What are," he exclaims, "the wars of to-day, the wars of Napoleon, as compared with this holy war, with a war which like the cradle of Bethlehem will bring mankind a bright future in return for a thousand years of suffering."<sup>30</sup> In *Ralph Doughbys Brautfahrt* we are told how in 1780 and 1781 the fathers of the new liberty looked over toward the East, with hearts sickened by anxiety

<sup>28</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 188.

<sup>29</sup> M. Diez, *Über die Naturschilderung in den Romanen Sealsfields*. He says (pp. 225-226): "The winning of the West, step by step, the advance of civilization and the conquering of the wild, virgin continent, extending to the shores of the Pacific, through the untiring toil of millions of hands—that is the specific American feature in American history; it is the heroic deed of the American people in the nineteenth century, upon which we look back with pride. This was recognized and extolled even by Sealsfield, a contemporary; he has given us incomparable sketches of this process, which, although frequently mere outlines and lacking in artistic execution (skizzenhaft oft und ohne künstlerische Durchgestaltung) are absolutely true and full of life."

<sup>30</sup> *Morton oder die grosse Tour*, p. 79.

and hope. "Their arms," says George Howard, "were almost lamed, their swords had become dull in the five years. They fought like men; but even men will finally fail before a greater power; and that power was terrible. Noble France then raised its powerful voice, and like a brother held out its hand to the exhausted swimmer,—the worn-out warrior."<sup>31</sup> In *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* the author refers to the War of 1812, paying tribute to the valor of the Americans and to General Jackson's military leadership. Finally, the *Kajütenbuch* contains vivid pictures from the heroic struggle of the Texans against Mexico.<sup>32</sup>

From numerous passages in Sealsfield's novels it can be seen how closely the author observed the character of the American people as a whole. Indeed, his views were not those of a transient traveler nor those of a prejudiced Englishman, but the views of a German-American who had the honest intention of

<sup>31</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> In his later life, after the publication of his works, Sealsfield continued to follow the social and political development of the United States closely from his Swiss home. With advancing years his mood became somewhat gloomy and pessimistic. Thus, he wrote to Cotta from New York on April 25, 1855: "I found the material progress in the United States within the seventeen years of my absence enormous, the political development less satisfying, and the moral conditions still worse." (Quoted by Faust, *Ch. Sealsfield, der Dichter beider Hemisphären*, etc., p. 248.) In several letters, written from Switzerland, the writer expresses his views on the Civil War, to which he turned his close attention. On September 21, 1861 (letter written to Elise Meyer, his secretary and nurse, from Unter den Tannen), he points to the great importance of this war for the history of the world without expressing his sympathy for either side. In his letter of October 15, 1861 (to E. Meyer, from U. d. T.), Sealsfield again appears very despondent. He even writes: "Ich fange an am Heile meines geliebten Amerika zu verzweifeln." Later, in 1862, he cherished hope and writes in the conclusion of a letter addressed to E. Meyer from U. d. T. on the eighth of May: "Es ist ein wahres Blutbad, in dem unser Volk schwimmt, unser Volk, aber es war notwendig zur Reinigung, zur Wiedergeburt." (Faust, *op. cit.*, p. 278.)

studying and comprehending the national characteristics of the Americans in all their relations, and presenting them to the Germans as characteristics of free citizens. He could not have accomplished this task without previously having been Americanized himself. No doubt, he speaks from experience when he points to the radical revolution which a residence of several years in the United States produces in the thought and feeling of a foreigner, especially in his views on life and politics. He notes that this change of ideas, of character in the immigrant is a singular phenomenon; it leads to a feeling of awakening powers which have long lain dormant in him and gives him a pure pleasure that he has never known before.<sup>33</sup>

Among the most conspicuous characteristics of the American people Sealsfield classes will-power, energy, and determination. Life in a free republican community and interest in politics from childhood on have an advantageous influence upon Americans and give them that self-discipline which is the strength, the foundation of the American commonwealth.<sup>34</sup> "We have," says the alcalde in the *Kajütenbuch*, "many faults, very many, but we possess also virtues which rise victoriously above our faults and crimes and promise great things for us. These virtues are an unshakable firmness of will and an all-sacrificing patriotism, a patriotism which even in the deepest moral abandonment still preserves itself bright."<sup>35</sup> In a similar passage it is said: "You know when an American firmly expresses his will, no power on earth can prevent him from carrying out his decision."<sup>36</sup> "Withley is a sharp, cautious man," we read in *Süden und Norden*, "in every sense of the word a true American, who thinks before he speaks and balances slowly

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Life in the New World*, pp. 338 f.

<sup>34</sup> *Morton oder die grosse Tour*, II, 71. *Kajütenbuch*, I, 238.

<sup>35</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 175.

<sup>36</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 128.



his determination; but when he once has made up his mind, he goes like a bullet toward his fixed point."<sup>37</sup> Characteristic in this respect is also the following passage, again in the *Kajütenbuch*: "Our proverb says: If it is cold with us, it freezes; if it is hot, it melts; if it rains, it pours, and in this it illustrates our national character as well as our climate. Our people do not like halves. If they desire anything, they desire it wholly. Difficulties and dangers do not terrify them, but only serve the more to spur them on. Half of them might sink in this struggle; the others would be sure to push through it. No people on earth, the ancient Romans perhaps excepted, have this intense energy, this enduring and almost terrible strength of will."<sup>38</sup>

The author pays further tribute to the courage of the Americans. In *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* Squire Copeland relates how gallantly the Americans held their ground in the struggle against the British in 1815. "Höre, wie Mauern standen sie, als die Eurigen anrückten, und gerade als ob sie auf Hirschhäute anlegten."<sup>39</sup> Similar bravery was displayed at the siege of Bexar in Texas. "All of our men, eleven hundred as they were, stepped forward, and coolly and calmly gave first the general and then us their hand and word to make Texas free, even if their lives must be sacrificed. No hurrahs, no enthusiasm, but the oaths of serious men. And they kept their oaths like men. I do not say too much when I assert that our eleven hundred men performed deeds from which five thousand of the most seasoned of Napoleon's Imperial Guards would have shrunk."<sup>40</sup> "On no occasion," says the same speaker earlier in his account, "did I perceive the swaggering British bull-dog courage, but always the constant, composed, decided,

<sup>37</sup> *Süden u. Norden*, chap. 23.

<sup>38</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 161.

<sup>39</sup> *Der Legitime* etc., chap. 39.

<sup>40</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 161.

calm, unshaken and unshakable courage of the Americans.”<sup>41</sup>

Another trait of character that won the favor of the author is American patriotism. The fanciful dreams of an all-embracing cosmopolitanism have found no entrance into the minds of the Americans. They know from experience that good cosmopolitans are usually bad politicians. And yet, they want to be good patriots, always anxious for the welfare of their country.<sup>42</sup> Their patriotism is first directed to the spot of ground which they inhabit; from there it extends until, finally, it embraces the whole broad Union.<sup>43</sup> This devotion which binds the American to his country is entirely different from the love of the foreigner for his native land. “Uncle Sam’s land is still a new property; it has none of the proud and frowning castles, the white halls, beautiful parks, grottos and gothic domes of old England. It has not the ivy-covered two-thousand-year-old obelisks, pantheons, and colosseums of the old Roman land, or the delicious vine-wreaths of la belle France,—it is a new property, with new buildings and new fields, only recently redeemed from the wilderness, where the master has not yet found time to think of halls, domes, and grottoes.”<sup>44</sup>

In *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* Sealsfield praises the adventurous spirit of enterprise as characteristic of the Americans. “The adventurous, bold, crafty spirit of the Anglo-Norman nation has passed to the descendants of that nation who inhabit the spacious tracts between the Mississippi and the Atlantic. Seventy years have passed since the foundation of the Republic, and their flags are already displayed on all seas, the thunder of their men-of-war roars before the mouths of all rivers, and the clever Yankee is in all sea-ports.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>42</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 179.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> *Der Legitime etc.*, I, 236.

In a number of passages the author points to the power of reasoning which distinguishes the Americans, and calls it keen, concentrated, sober, and directed toward practical results. "We are a peculiar people,—quiet, sober and reflective, perfect Romans at one time, at another ingenuous and unsophisticated."<sup>46</sup> The American spirit, although sometimes it shows itself in a singular way, "hits the nail on the head and never loses sight of the great end, its own advantage."<sup>47</sup> "The American does not undertake a task unless it is worth the trouble."<sup>48</sup> In the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften* the author notes that a certain seriousness in business affairs is a beautiful trait in the national character of the Americans, justifying them in their most exalted hopes. "This is what I mean by seriousness in business and character, the seriousness of a people in attaining with consistency its objects, unbaffled by obstacles, whatever they may be."<sup>49</sup> A similar idea is expressed by George Howard in the following passage: "There is something truly practical in our American nature that distinguishes us from other nations of the globe,—a certain straightforward, healthy common sense, that, unimpressed by external glitter and splendor, appreciates only real values in life; an honest, independent spirit that only pays respect to him who merits it."<sup>50</sup> The American imbibes this independent spirit with his mother's milk and puts into practice one of his proverbs: "Respect yourself, and your enemies will not look down on you."<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the Americans have an innate respect for the views of other people. Political and religious intolerance

<sup>46</sup> *Rambleton*, etc., p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 152.

<sup>48</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 331.

<sup>49</sup> *Rambleton*, etc., p. 209.

<sup>50</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 57.

<sup>51</sup> *Der Legitime* etc., III, 57.

is unknown and hateful to them. They have a natural aversion to prerogatives; mere arrogance or passionate imperiousness is loathsome to them.<sup>52</sup> Although Europeans are sometimes disagreeably affected by the apathy and rudeness of the Americans, they appreciate the natural tact which even the most ordinary American possesses,—“that indifferent, genteel nonchalance which sets the stranger at ease with himself. In the United States you can adopt it as a rule that so long as you act like a gentleman, you are treated as one.”<sup>53</sup>

If Americans sometimes appear as rude, inaccessible beings, this trait has its valid reasons and a moral basis.<sup>54</sup> In the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften* the old gentleman Schochstein explains this reserve as follows: “Überhaupt habe ich gefunden, dass je freier eine Nation wird, desto mehr verliert sie jenes Gemütlich-Hingebende.”<sup>55</sup> The American of the West is, on the whole, far more cordial in his disposition than the American of the East.<sup>56</sup> The backwoodsman does not yield to any one in warmth of feeling and genuine politeness,<sup>57</sup> and a quiet unostentatious hospitality is a pleasing trait in the character of the Southern planter.<sup>58</sup>

The almost proverbial love of money of the Americans is frequently referred to in Sealsfield's works. It is called “the ruling passion” of the people<sup>59</sup> and has its source in the absence of artificial distinctions. Wealth is for the American “the grand passport to public and private importance. Selfishness, however,

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 146.

<sup>53</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 325.

<sup>54</sup> *Nathan, der Squatter-Regulator*, pp. 319, 330.

<sup>55</sup> *Rambleton*, etc., p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> *Nathan, der Squatter-Regulator*, p. 318.

<sup>57</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 328.

<sup>58</sup> *Kajütenbuch*, I, 46.

<sup>59</sup> *The United States*, etc., I, 233.



is unknown to him.”<sup>60</sup> “Uncle Sam is not the grumbling old egoist the world would have him, nor a morose miser who forever knits his brow and thinks and studies how he can possibly gather the greatest number of dollars.” “There is not a people on earth who, when in possession of wealth, makes a more beneficial use of it.”<sup>61</sup> The Americans earn their money “like race-horses, and squander it like asses.”<sup>62</sup> They are generous and large-hearted, inspired in all their actions by that beautiful “*caritas generis humani*,” which the Romans knew by name, but did not practice.<sup>63</sup> The author reminds the Germans that they are indebted to this generosity of America: “The freest nation on earth has proved herself, at the same time, the most liberal toward Germany, and has paid, with interest, the debt which she contracted with the Steubens and De Kalbs, by the hospitable reception of hundreds of thousands of their poor fellow-countrymen, and has always delighted in strengthening and cementing mutual relations.”<sup>64</sup>

In the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften* the writer points to what seem to be contrasts in the character of the American people. “A truly strange people,” he says, “the roughest, most sober, most inaccessible, repulsive, kind, importunate, taciturn, loquacious people, which, ten minutes after being repulsed, again overloads you from the cornucopia of its plenty, forces you to accept its presents, hangs upon you like a bur, opens its purse and heart, and in its liberality arouses your extreme wonder.”<sup>65</sup> In *Ralph Doughbys Brautfahrt* America is called “the land of contrasts, where the life of man shows

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 75. *Kajütenbuch*, II, 198.

<sup>62</sup> *D.-a. Wahlverwandtschaften* (transl.), p. 347.

<sup>63</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 289.

<sup>64</sup> *D.-a. Wahlverwandtschaften* (transl.), p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> *D.-a. Wahlverwandtschaften* (transl.), p. 28.

itself before your eyes as it was three thousand years ago, and as it is now. In our Eastern States, the highest culture exists, in some parts even higher than in Europe, with many of the vices of their debauched civilization. In the farthest West may be seen that commencement of civilization as it was brought across the Black Sea by Saturn and Jupiter, who were, in recompense, adored as gods; and later by Cecrops, from Egypt into Greece. These are contrasts which only a narrow mind finds unnatural."<sup>66</sup>

That Sealsfield, however, did not shut his eyes to the darker sides of the social life of his time, is shown by a passage in the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandschaften*, where he speaks of the depravity of the rich, of rudeness of manners, and of lawlessness, which make themselves strongly felt among the people.<sup>67</sup>

No other trait in the character of the American people appealed to Sealsfield so much as their love of liberty. He pays it the highest tribute. "We have many faults," he makes one of his characters say, "and are far from angels,—but we have one virtue which covers a multitude of sins: we respect the dignity of men and the rights of citizens; and this has won for us from the greatest tyrant the highest prize earth-born men ever sought for: liberty, in our country and upon the seas."<sup>68</sup>

In eloquent language the writer praises this liberty as the noblest feature in the social and political life of the Union. "How many grand children of kings and sovereigns, perhaps their sons, may hereafter rest in the shade of this liberty which is now the detestation of their fathers."<sup>69</sup> Sealsfield exalts the

<sup>66</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 103.

<sup>67</sup> *D.-a. Wahlverwandschaften*, III, 362.

<sup>68</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

free American citizen and his political independence as a model before the German reader and points to the difference in the way this liberty was won by the British and by the Americans.<sup>70</sup>

The Americans are, in a sense, ruled by principles, and not by the strong hand.<sup>71</sup> In a conflict of opinions the best as well as the worst character can reflect and unreservedly express his views; thus, evil powers lose their poison if it is recognized, and only reasonable arguments prevail and become a vital principle.<sup>72</sup>

Sealsfield regards this liberty as of the greatest importance to mankind. "To be a free native American citizen is the highest privilege,—the most glorious attribute."<sup>73</sup> The whole civilized world has been benefited through this spirit of American liberty; the French and South American revolutions, the liberal uprisings in Spain, Portugal, and Piedmont owe their origin to the influence of the United States, particularly to the success which crowned its efforts in the Revolutionary War.<sup>74</sup>

America's democracy appeared to the author as the true political expression of this liberty. "Democracy," he holds, "is necessary to the ultimate grandeur and welfare of the country." "It has become the creator of a million life-giving elements in our land, and has brought self-respect, yes even dignity into our cottages."<sup>75</sup> In the *Kajütenbuch*, through the mouth

<sup>70</sup> *Der Legitime* etc., III, 295.—"In der Tat," he writes in the *Cotta'sche Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* on Jan. 19, 1828, "ist hier das Land, wo man gar nicht fühlt, dass eine Regierung existiert. Man mag zehn Jahre da leben, und wird nie fühlen, dass man regiert, d. h. beherrscht wird. Hierin liegt der ganze Unterschied zwischen dem Yankeelande und dem freilich gebildeteren Europa."

<sup>71</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 330.

<sup>72</sup> *Der Legitime* etc., II, 236, III, 144.

<sup>73</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 110.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. introduction to *The United States*, etc.

<sup>75</sup> *Pflanzerleben*, I, 266.

of the alcalde, the author pays an enthusiastic and respectful tribute to Jefferson as the dauntless champion of America's democracy. "Never has anyone so entirely comprehended the spirit of democracy, her nature, her fructifying power, and brought this triumphal car of man to advance so fast."<sup>76</sup> In two special chapters of the *Pflanzerleben* the fundamental principles and glorious achievements of this democracy are discussed by George Howard at length.<sup>77</sup> It is an invigorating, preserving, and creative power, "which in proportion as it is beneficial to us will react advantageously on the stormy atmosphere of the other continent." "The spirit of America's democracy has armed millions of mechanical hands with a free will, has torn down the curtain concealing the western land from the East, and established a dominion which in seventy years will be inhabited by a hundred millions of free citizens,—a monster republic, resting its right foot on the shores of the Atlantic, and its left on the Pacific; sustaining millions of free men, who live under the law of Christ and speak the language of Shakespeare and Milton."

Sealsfield was, however, not blind to the weaknesses of this democracy. "It is our American curse that we bring everything that comes within our reach down to our low, democratic level."<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, we hear of the "Krebs-schäden" of democratic government. The authority of the great historical men has vanished. "Our shoemakers and tailors speak of Washington and Franklin as of their apprentices, and every whipster believes himself capable of rearing a better fabric of state,—gloomy symptoms of basely corrupted vigor."<sup>79</sup> In addition, "that old homely virtue styled honesty" (die alte

<sup>76</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 72.

<sup>77</sup> *Pflanzerleben*, I, chaps. V and VI.

<sup>78</sup> *The Cabin Book*, p. 81.

<sup>79</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 31.



hausbackene Tugend, Ehrlichkeit genannt) is not found any longer in America's democracy. In its place we find a destructive demagoguery which is not restricted to politicians alone. "This spirit penetrates our entire existence and becomes a poison, of which the direful effects are deeply and extensively felt."<sup>80</sup>

On the other hand, Sealsfield is opposed to an aristocracy of wealth in the United States. "No nation in the universe has such stiff manners as ours, and especially our good families; for, thank Heaven! our middle classes, the real nation, know nothing of it. But our aristocracy,—that is those who would like to be it; if it depended on them, our popular independence would soon be destroyed. Clubs, divisions, subdivisions, run over each other from Maine to the Gulf of Mexico, like spider-webs. The man who has a hundred thousand dollars will not condescend to look at the one who has fifty thousand; and the latter is as arrogant toward him who has only ten thousand. You are just as respectable as you have money. And this, too, is one of John Bull's beautiful legacies."<sup>81</sup>

In *George Howards Brautfahrt* and the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften* the author gives us an interesting account of New York society in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. The love story in these novels is rich in the most brilliant genre-pictures of the fashionable world, such as the meeting of a young ladies' club in New York and the life at Saratoga Springs. Sealsfield thinks that the wealthier families live in a style which, in New York especially, exceeds all proper bounds.<sup>82</sup>

In regard to American women Sealsfield's opinion is as follows: "Those of the lower and middle class give a dignity, a grace to every motion which our European ladies of the same,

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>81</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 74. Cf. *Pflanzerleben*, II, 32.

<sup>82</sup> *The United States*, etc., p. 119.

or even a higher grade, do not know.”<sup>83</sup> The Creoles in Louisiana cannot read nor write, and yet they are fine girls and make good wives, better wives than the blue-stockings in New England, who “read novels and newspapers, and gabble about literature and arts and fashionable science and preachers and comedies.”<sup>84</sup> In the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften*, in the figure of Dougaldine, the author presents the charming characteristics of a true American young woman.<sup>85</sup> The society girls in New York appear in a very favorable, to be sure, somewhat ethereal light: “These light, gentle beings, with their soft, intelligent features, their bright, liquid eyes, their delicate figures, and their dainty hands are positively irresistible.”<sup>86</sup> The Boston girls are more intellectual and their features more regular, but their Yankee-like bearing is unpleasant. Besides, “they are such confounded blue-stockings.” Again, the Philadelphians are more round and elastic, excellent figures, “they chat pleasantly and cannot be excelled in small talk.”<sup>87</sup> In his descriptive work on the United States the author gives a detailed account of the daily life and pursuits of New York’s fashionable ladies. He mentions that they imitate the fashion of the British metropolis. They do everything to appear as attractive as possible. Moreover, “they possess a certain degree of assurance which seems to be founded on the

<sup>83</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 308.

<sup>84</sup> *North and South*, etc., chap. III (Mariquita).

<sup>85</sup> Faust, *Charles Sealsfield, der Dichter beider Hemisphären*, p. 112.—Of a different opinion is Soffé in his treatise *Charles Sealsfield*, p. 31. Faust says: “Der Dichter hat hier die Amerikanerin geschildert, lange ehe Henry James’ *Daisy Miller* erschien (1878) oder ehe der moderne realistische Roman die Theorie aufgestellt hatte, dass die gallische oder slavische Frau sich ihrer Leidenschaft, die deutsche sich dem Manne opfere, die Amerikanerin aber sich nicht unterwirft, sondern sich selbst getreu bleibt.”

<sup>86</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 6.

idea that they are necessarily the central point of a man's attention." In contrast with their European sisters, they claim the gallantry of gentlemen as their right.<sup>88</sup> Sealsfield puts the blame for this pretentiousness of fashionable girls on coeducation in the colleges, from which he expects a harmful influence upon the national life. "Our girls," he says in the *Deutsch-amerikanische Wahlverwandtschaften*, "become men,—assume the pride of men; we become women,—effeminate matrons." In addition, he censures American men for acting the most absurd part with the female sex. "We treat them not as women, but as dolls, as goddesses, and this bending our knees fills our girls with high-flown pretensions; and hence, if one grants them the breadth of a hand, they are sure to claim marriage."<sup>89</sup>

Country life in America is praised as the main pillar of liberty. Its characteristics are a well-nigh royal independence, an absence of all provincialism (*kleinstädtisches Wesen*), and an active co-operation in the great tasks of the nation.<sup>90</sup>

In contrast with this country life there appears more and more in the life of the cities a certain stiffness which imitates the manners and customs of other countries and effaces all the originality of true Americanism.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, we find in the cities much common sense prevailing in the construction of public and private buildings. The cities are built after a regular plan; they are airy, bright, comfortable, and elegant. There are hardly any luxurious palaces. The court-houses are elegant in spite of their simplicity. New York is regarded as the most splendid city, Boston as the most aristocratic.

<sup>88</sup> *The United States* etc., pp. 120 f.

<sup>89</sup> *Rambleton*, etc., p. 145.

<sup>90</sup> *Morton oder die grosse Tour*, chap. III, p. 98. *The United States* etc., p. 126.

<sup>91</sup> *The United States*, etc., p. 126.

The city of Washington shows in its structure all the characteristics of a grand style. Furthermore, Baltimore, Richmond, Va., New Orleans, and Cincinnati are beautiful cities. Everywhere the enterprising spirit of the nation impresses our minds.<sup>92</sup>

The home life of the Americans has the appearance of a certain formality. A foreigner who for the first time lives with a private American family would think he is among people who are strangers to one another. The American shows to his wife and children little more intimacy than to his neighbors. His relations with his friends and neighbors are extremely "korrekt." Children cannot expect any financial resources from their parents before the latter die. Sealsfield notes that the Americans have a certain family spirit which, sacrificing everything for the welfare of their children, glories in the latter's growing prosperity.<sup>93</sup> He regrets, however, the frightful lack of sentiment which is shown when parents and children part.<sup>94</sup>

In his work on the United States Sealsfield gives a detailed account of the militia. In the *Kajütenbuch* he points out that the American is not of much use in a fortress. The restraint deadens his body and mind, while in the open air he remains invincible, though ten times beaten.<sup>95</sup> In *Der Legitime und die Republikaner* Squire Copeland praises the militia, because it volunteers for the defense of "Haus und Hof," and is not pressed into military service like European mercenaries. We are invited to admire the marksmanship of the Americans.<sup>96</sup> "In 1815, when the American soldiers in the South left their barracks for the war, there was no such singing, drinking,

<sup>92</sup> *The United States* etc., p. 126.

<sup>93</sup> *D.-a. Wahlverwandtschaften*, III, 253.

<sup>94</sup> *The United States* etc., pp. 118, 119, 125.

<sup>95</sup> *Kajütenbuch*, II, 91.

<sup>96</sup> *Der Legitime* etc., I, 188-189.



speech-making as is usual in European countries in order to encourage the troops leaving for the front. The Americans parted from their relatives in a dignified, calm spirit."<sup>97</sup> In this novel as well as in the *Kajütenbuch* where the Texan war for independence is treated, the gallantry of the American soldiers receives full credit, as we have seen above.<sup>98</sup>

In *George Howards Brautfahrt* the author draws an interesting parallel between American and British sailors. The crew of the United States Frigate "Constitution," we are told, are a merry lot. "These men are characterized by a merry, free, and independent spirit, together with strong and daring valor. They have learned to deal with New Zealanders, Chinese, Turks, and Frenchmen, and to look proudly down upon them all, since they have beaten the mistress of the sea. The British sailor returns home to his yoke more stupid than when he went away; the American, ever more enlightened, for servitude compels the mind to retrograde, while liberty urges it forward. The one knows that knowledge is dangerous or superfluous, as regards the end of his course,—Greenwich hospital; the other knows that he must acquire it that he may enter honorably and profitably upon the active life of a free citizen. And John Bull in his stupidity is astonished that with our five frigates we should have taken ten of his, and driven him from our seas in two principal battles? He who sends away his poor sailors with fifteen shillings, and, if they forget themselves a moment, sends them for two or three months into a black hole."<sup>99</sup>

In the eleventh chapter of his descriptive work Sealsfield discusses the religious life of the Americans. He considers that article of the Constitution which places all religions in America on equal terms, one of the wisest resolutions ever passed by a

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, III, chap. 30.

<sup>98</sup> See page 135.

<sup>99</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 10.

legislative body. "The American," he notes, "is religiously inclined, and if not so in reality, in appearance at least, he is more sincere than the European." In Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and the larger commercial towns the style of church-buildings is splendid, and exhibits a taste and liberality equally conspicuous. "It is not unusual to see a farmer in but moderate circumstances subscribe two or three hundred dollars." Everything taken into consideration, the author declares, it will appear beyond doubt that to be religious in the United States is very expensive. Furthermore, we hear of the various religious denominations and institutions, of the clergy, the Sabbath-observance, and camp-meetings. In the *Pflanzerleben* the writer discusses these meetings at length and says in conclusion: "I have due respect for the true spiritual vocation and for those men who enter the wilderness to prepare our Indians for religious education by suitable employment; but save me from these camp-meeting preachers."<sup>100</sup> The religious sect of the Shakers is treated in an article in the *Ausland*, published by Sealsfield on January 7, 1828. In *Nathan; der Squatter-Regulator* we are led into a singing-school of a Southern plantation. We listen to the songs of the young backwoods-people, sixty or seventy boys and girls. "The young community were singing the soul-elevating songs of the Presbyterian church; the melodies were, then, mostly of that simple choral style which has such a touching effect."<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, we become acquainted with the true representative of the New England singing-school masters, "his hand beating time, and his body swaying to and fro with the rise and fall of the notes," a thorough master of the art of sacred music.

A special chapter in Sealsfield's work *The United States of North America* etc. deals with education, and the arts and

<sup>100</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 138.

<sup>101</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 333.

sciences in America. We hear that their cultivation is still in its infancy. American men of letters are "deficient in the elegant, the polished, and the classical taste of English writers," and they are equally strangers to the systematic pedantry of the Germans, "who know every part of the world except their own country";—but in the art of practical application of their knowledge, they probably excel both England and Germany.<sup>102</sup> In comparing European and American universities Sealsfield calls the latter "compendiums of instruction" (Wissenschaftscompendien), as only the general principles of European letters and sciences are taught in American colleges. Although men of learning are not wanting in America, Sealsfield thinks they are too impatient, too egotistical to apply the necessary time to study the speculative sciences. There is also, he notes, a marked difference between European and American students. "If the American attends a college, he does it not to improve his talent, but to make money as speedily as possible; he wants to learn quickly, and only to acquire what is absolutely necessary. Satisfied with the elements of science, he supplies the rest by private reading, by experience, and by natural shrewdness." He wants to make money, and, therefore, leaves philosophy to the clergy, and poetry to the ladies. "These occupations are looked upon as idle pursuits." In politics, law, mathematics, and medicine, however, the talents of the Americans are truly astonishing. Sealsfield is of the opinion that amidst the bustle of mercantile and public life in America, poetry, music, and philosophy are not likely to flourish or to become popular in the United States, because this kind of mental activity is not calculated for "making money." In this connection George Howard says in the *Pflanzerleben*: "I have never heard of an American statesman, or of any man occupying a distinguished position who was a musical amateur. I believe it is particularly

<sup>102</sup> *The United States* etc., chap. IX.

because a certain facility in music requires a loss of time, which must frighten every one who knows the value of his hours. With us, consequently, a good piano-player would excite, at the same time, pleasure and pity, if not contempt. Fond as we are of seeing artistical perfection in our ladies, we cannot avoid thinking that a man might employ his time and powers to much better advantage. Moreover, we are very careful not to be carried away by our feelings or passionate excitements; and music, especially, unnerves and unmans us. Sensible and excitable individuals as well as nations are not created for liberty."<sup>103</sup>

The heroes and heroines of Sealsfield's novels are, for the most part, products of the author's imagination; he has, however, succeeded in embodying in them the characteristics of true Americans. Two masterly sketched types of the American that cleared the Urwälder with the axe of culture and sets forth to conquer the world are Ralph Doughby and Nathan, the squatter-chief. The former, a jovial, daring, and reckless Kentuckian, a "Kraftgestalt," full of life, the son of the wilderness and later a republican agitator, is a bold, naïve, exceedingly vigorous figure, splendidly designed and executed. Even more important is the squatter-chief, Nathan, "der Riesengeist mit dem Stolze des freigebornen Mannes und der Demut des neugebornen Kindes,"<sup>104</sup> the conqueror of the wilderness and venerable patriarch in settlements, founded by himself, who, however, shuns the law of the land that will impose limitations on his manly pride. Of other characters, Squire Copeland, in *Der Legitime und die Republikaner*, is the type of the brave, self-reliant backwoodsman, and Captain Murky, in the *Kajütenbuch*, that of the Yankee who has his heart on the right side and is taciturn, but chivalrous and benevolent toward

<sup>103</sup> *Life in the New World*, p. 206.

<sup>104</sup> *Kajütenbuch*, I, 235.



oppressed people. The alcalde, in the same novel, from Virginia or Tennessee, is an "ante-diluvial, gigantic figure,"<sup>105</sup> with herculean shoulders and sharp, gray eyes, and besides, with a democratic, self-conscious nature, a Texan phlegm and an iron, consistent will. On the other hand, Bob, in the same work, represents the desperado, the outcast of mankind, who, however, may still serve an important purpose in the powerful advance of American civilization.<sup>106</sup> Finally, in Stephen Girard we find the type of the American banker with his active disposition and his spirit of financial enterprise.<sup>107</sup>

We have treated Sealsfield rather extensively, since his works are a landmark in German imaginative literature on America. While up to the third decade of the nineteenth century the Germans obtained information on the United States mostly from German travelers or English and French sources, or from Cooper's works, in the thirties and forties there came across the sea these fascinating novels of a German-American writer which were intended to convey to the German people first-hand knowledge of the national characteristics of the young Republic, and were based on the thoughtful observation of a number of years. Soon Sealsfield's broadly conceived and realistic presentation of America found many admirers on both sides of the Atlantic and stimulated still more, in Germany, the interest in the New World. "The general approval," says Faust, "with which his 'Pictures from American Life' were received in all Europe, can be compared with the extraordinary success achieved by his contemporaries Walter Scott and Cooper."<sup>108</sup> It is true, the author seems sometimes to have been carried away by his enthusiasm for his adopted country. Besides, the

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 145.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *Morton oder die grosse Tour*.

<sup>108</sup> *Charles Sealsfield, der Dichter beider Hemisphären*, p. 1.

Anglo-American idiom of his style was for many a stumbling-block, and the loose structure of his novels, with the plot frequently interrupted by social and political reflections and discussions, was severely criticized. And yet, "even to-day, after seven decades," says Max Diez, "Sealsfield's novels must be counted among the most valuable literary monuments of the history of American civilization."<sup>109</sup> The fact that Sealsfield, the former Austrian monk, fought his way to an admirable comprehension of the characteristic features of the American people and that he presented these characteristics in such vigorous language along strikingly realistic lines, gives him, as the first German interpreter of American culture, a permanent place in the history of German literature.

Sealsfield's example in writing ethnographical novels was followed by Gerstäcker, whose earlier accounts of his travels and life in America appeared in the years 1844 to 1848. The two authors wrote their American novels entirely independently of each other and treated their subject, the presentation of life in the United States, in an entirely different way, as we shall see. Friedrich Gerstäcker (1816-1872) was born in Hamburg. After an apprenticeship in a commercial house in Cassel, he learned farming in Saxony. In 1837, having imbibed from *Robinson Crusoe* a taste for adventures, he emigrated to the New World and wandered over a large part of the United States, supporting himself by whatever work came to hand. In 1843 he returned to Germany, where he published descriptions of his wanderings and novels, mostly dealing with adventures in America. In the second half of his life he traveled again for a number of years through South America, California (1849-1852), a part of Australia, Egypt, and Abyssinia (with Duke Ernst von Koburg-Gotha), North America (1867-1868), and the West Indies.

<sup>109</sup> M. Diez, *Über die Naturschilderung in den Romanen Sealsfields*, p. 189.

Gerstäcker's impressions and experiences in foreign lands, especially in America, are recorded in about 150 volumes of descriptions of travel, sketches, novels, and shorter stories. There is one conspicuous difference between the works of Sealsfield and those of Gerstäcker which makes the latter less important for our purpose: while Sealsfield makes Americans heroes of his novels, Gerstäcker deals mostly with the life of German immigrants and settlers. In 1844 appeared his *Streif- und Jagdzüge durch die Vereinigten Staaten*. Here the author narrates the experiences which he had when he visited America for the first time and wandered through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. He describes Cincinnati as beyond doubt the most beautiful and prosperous city of the West, "the center of the whole Western commerce," "the eldorado of the German immigrants." He criticizes the habit of the Americans of giving high-sounding names to their small, newly-founded settlements. He tells us about the German farmer in Missouri, about the Indians in Arkansas, and about the hunting of the panther, duck, alligator, and bear. Interestingly he tells of his wanderings through Urwald and prairie, of the life of the backwoodsmen, and of his visit to New Orleans. Very unfavorable is his opinion of the slave-trade in America, of which he had received a most unpleasant impression on attending a public sale of negroes in Louisiana. "Slavery," he fears, "the stain upon the free States of North America, will sometime be the cause of their dissolution, at least of the separation of the Northern from the Southern States."<sup>110</sup>

In the novel *Regulatoren in Arkansas* (1846) the author depicts the war to the knife which the "men of Arkansas," members of a vigilance committee of "regulators," undertook against the rough elements that fled from the East and South of the Union into the trackless forests and swamps of Arkansas.

<sup>110</sup> Gerstäcker, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

In justification of lynch-law the "regulators" declare: "We are not yet organized here in our State to bring criminals to court and to keep them in custody. Everything is yet too new here. No State, however, is so much in need of protection as Arkansas, and something must be done, if we do not want to perish ourselves."<sup>111</sup> The author gives us, furthermore, a vivid account of the forest life of the Indians and of the various points of social contact which exist between these aborigines and the white settlers, who, however, step by step force back the Indians toward the West. The chief character of the novel is Rawson, a minister of the Methodists, who through his hypocritical piety attracts many sentimental people, especially women, until it develops that he himself is a horse-thief, a robber, and a murderer.

*Die Flusspiraten des Mississippi* (1848) is another story of adventure. We see the backwoodsmen in their struggle against a lawless gang of roughs, which causes trouble to the travelers along the shores of the Mississippi and on the small islands lying in the stream in its Southern reaches. Here and there in the narrative we find interesting accounts of the Southern country and its inhabitants. Thus, in Helena, a town in Arkansas, the "Hotel of the Union" and its guests are described, and the author regrets that the American inns, although built for the convenience of travelers, lack all comforts.

During his first stay in America, Gerstäcker was correspondent for a number of German journals, such as the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Ausland*. The issues of the *Ausland*, in the years 1845 and 1846, contain a number of "Amerikanische Skizzen," descriptive articles, which were published later as a part of the *Mississippibilder* (1847-1848). The writer describes Cincinnati, especially the German element

<sup>111</sup> Gerstäcker, *op. cit.*, p. 326.



there, the commerce, the coffee-houses, the "Geldwechsler," auctions and "Kleiderläden" in that city. Furthermore, he gives an account of the backwoodsmen and their wives, dwelling especially upon the latter's hardships in the vast lonely forests, upon their courage and energy, their manifold household duties and few diversions. Other subjects discussed in the "Skizzen" are the rough and ill-reputed flat-boat men on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, the wandering peddlers, and the schools in the forests of the Southwest. In these schools, we hear, debates are frequently held among the young students, sometimes on the most trivial topics. The relation between teachers and pupils is also very different from that in European countries. "That liberty and equality which unites all classes, extends also to these, and however earnest and strict the teacher may be in school, outside of it or in recess and recreation hours he conducts himself unconstrained towards his pupils; seldom do these play a game or have a race in which he does not take part and often he is the most frolicsome of the whole crowd; but I do not know of any case when in the backwoods a boy or girl got a beating from the teacher; through ambition they stimulate each other in their studies."<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, the author must admit: "The childlike life, the happy playing of youth, all this is known to the American only by name."

In 1847 Gerstäcker published in the *Urania, Taschenbuch für Literatur*, a novel entitled *Die Tochter des Ricarees*. Here the author sketches the wild life in the forests of Louisiana. Saise, the daughter of an Indian chieftain of the tribe of the Ricarees, has been kidnapped by a white man. She has, however, succeeded in escaping from the robber and has found shelter on the plantation of a wealthy Creole in Louisiana. After a number of years she is discovered there by the kid-

<sup>112</sup> *Das Ausland*, 1845, p. 1283.

napper and is carried away again. The brute has almost reached the zone of safety, when Saise's brother hears what has happened. He pursues the robber and shoots him to death. The latter, however, has already ended the life of the Indian girl with his hunting-knife.

In the greater part of his novels Gerstäcker treats by preference the subject of German emigration to America and the life of the gold-diggers in California.<sup>113</sup> In the account of his last visit to America, in 1867, in his volume *Neue Reisen* (1868), he gives his impressions of the country as viewed after an absence of more than two decades, a period which had seen the overthrow of slavery and the beginning of the vast expansion which followed the war between the States. He says in this connection: "In regard to his spirit of enterprise the American is not surpassed, nor even equaled, by any nation of the world. The resources of the country and its wealth are inexhaustible, and the only thing which was lacking in his incessant efforts was that steady, patient industry which the German possesses in such a high degree. Better people for agriculture and handicraft he could not wish; the filling of this need gave him a free hand for all other things; and what he is able to accomplish when supported by German intellectual power, he has already shown in a thousand ways, and he still shows it to this day."<sup>114</sup>

Gerstäcker's novels became very popular in Germany, especially among young people, and were widely read among the masses, which are always eager for excitement and adventures. The charm of his stories results first of all from the vivid, conversational tone, which despite all defects of style and composition arrests and holds our attention. Other attractive

<sup>113</sup> *Der deutschen Auswanderer Fahrten u. Schicksale* (1847).—*Nach Amerikal* (1855).—*Kalifornische Skizzen* (1856).—*Gold! Kalifornisches Lebensbild* (1872).

<sup>114</sup> *Neue Reisen*, pp. 199 ff.

elements in the novels are the "Robinson-spirit" which pervades all of Gerstäcker's writings, depicting, as they do, the fascinating struggles of settlers and pioneers with the American wilderness and the great number of murder-robber-thief adventures, which never fail to find their reading public. It was only too natural that in these years when so many ships, filled with German emigrants in search of a new home, crossed the Atlantic, these novels met with a ready demand among their fellow-citizens who remained in the Fatherland. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the cultural and literary value of Gerstäcker's novels is by far inferior to that of Sealsfield's works. While the latter seeks, above all, to set forth the characteristic features of the Americans at the expense even of the development of the plot, Gerstäcker is mainly concerned with satisfying the interest of those readers who are particularly fond of fascinating, exotic, sensational stories. Sealsfield must be considered a real "Kulturhistoriker" of America; Gerstäcker is hardly more than an ordinary story-teller. He attaches very little importance to an exact portrayal of the characters or to a presentation of true Americanism. Compared with the work of Sealsfield, his novels appear crude, superficial, and without ideas. Indeed, so little of literary value has been found in his novels that some critics refuse to regard them as works of genuine literature at all. Rudolf von Gottschall stands almost alone among literary historians in assigning to Gerstäcker a position beside Sealsfield. In his widely read history of German literature in the nineteenth century he says: "The exotic novel of Sealsfield reflects the love of an enthusiastic cosmopolitanism; the exotic novel of Gerstäcker is the fruit of a sound realism."<sup>115</sup> Gerstäcker excels in his descriptions of the grandiose character of Nature in America, descriptions which offer refreshing spots to pause and rest the nerves in the midst of the thrilling development of the action. Very

<sup>115</sup> R. v. Gottschall, *Deutsche Nationalliteratur*, IV, 374.

charming, for instance, is his picture of the romantic beauty of the American forest in the splendor of spring: "The wild storms of spring had made way for gentle May. Flowers and blossoms burst forth between the yellow couch of leaves which densely covered the ground and only here and there was interrupted by juicy green, fresh plots of grass. But blossoms on blossoms shot forth also from the branches of the low dogwood trees and allspice; flowers and buds hung on the luxuriant garlands of the lianas which twined from tree to tree, and filled with sweet perfume the forest canopy arched by gigantic pines, oaks, and sassafras trees."<sup>116</sup> The author also gives us an impressive and romantically eloquent sketch of the "Father of the Waters": "Mississippi, mighty stream of that distant world, — wildly and marvelously thou rollest thy sweeping floods toward the sea, and with powerful arms thou stretchest into East and West, into the heart of the Rocky Mountains thousands of miles distant as well as into the innermost clefts of the boldly rising Alleghanies."<sup>117</sup>

To the practical sense and independent spirit of Gerstäcker the characteristic sides of national life in America of course appealed very much. "The United States," he says in the *Neue Reisen*, mentioned above, "is indeed one of the most beautiful countries of the globe and is predestined by nature, as it were, to become the home of a great and mighty people."<sup>118</sup> He mentions also that the young people in the United States were about a century ahead of the village youth of Germany in regard to the power of reasoning.

In concluding this chapter we may truly say that the ethnographical novel of the forties played perhaps the most important part in imaginative literature in conveying to the Germans a clear picture of conditions in America.

<sup>116</sup> *Regulatoren in Arkansas*, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> *Die Flusspiraten des Mississippi*, p. 211.

<sup>118</sup> *Neue Reisen*, p. 192.



## CHAPTER V

### AUSTRIAN WRITERS

Even more than in Germany the political oppression of a reactionary government was felt in Austria during the first half of the nineteenth century. Here, too, many liberal-minded men, feeling themselves restrained in the development of their intellectual talents and much concerned about the welfare of their country, turned their eyes across the Atlantic and hailed America as the ideal land of liberty. Of such men L. A. Frankl, the author of the epic *Cristoforo Colombo*, and Charles Sealsfield, the author of German-American cultural novels, have already been mentioned in previous chapters. Another writer of literary fame and liberal views was Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben of Vienna (1806-1849), noted as a physician of keen intellect and a poet of refined esthetic culture and wide philosophical training. In his prose works he combated the views of those reactionary statesmen of his time who condemned republican tendencies as "Künste der Hölle." He held the moral and intellectual liberty of man in high respect and declared that he had never heard of republican vices, but often of republican virtues. In this connection he refers to the United States and says (1848): "The righteousness of an Aristides, the severity of a Cato, the self-denial of a Brutus, the heroic obedience of a Regulus, the heroism of a Sidney, a Washington, or a Bolivar, the philanthropy of a Franklin—were these the devilish ghosts against which we are warned so anxiously? Are not public spirit and firm, strict observance of the law just the characteristics of this republican virtue?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Feuchtersleben, *Ausgewählte Werke*, IV, 395.

The romantic conception of America is predominant in Lenau's personal and literary relations to our country. The theme "Lenau and America" has been discussed at length in numerous essays and has had new light thrown upon it in recent decades by American scholars.<sup>2</sup> We shall, therefore, not enter on a detailed discussion of Lenau's American journey, but shall concentrate our attention on those features of America which are mirrored in the imagination of the Austrian poet of Weltschmerz.

Even during his university years in Vienna (1827-1830) Lenau, with his ideal of republicanism, saw in America the Land of Promise and considered emigration to the New World.<sup>3</sup> The motives for this plan were, at the beginning, purely practical. The prospect of getting a dependable position in Austria became more and more remote for him in those years, and made him think it would be easier to earn and save money in America. "As early as the end of 1831," says Schurz in his biographical work *Lenaus Leben*, "out of the background appeared from time to time his plan of taking refuge in America with the rest of his ready money and purchasing there land on which the forests were to transform themselves into abundant wealth."<sup>4</sup> During the restless autumn months in Stuttgart and Heidelberg the plan began to take definite shape. "He has," writes Sophie Schwab to her friend Lucie Meyer in Bremen (Nov. 1, 1831) of Lenau, "together with a few excellent friends to whom the Austrian political government is unbearable—one an astronomer and the other an architect—conceived a plan for his life: to go for five or six years across to the New World; for

<sup>2</sup> A. Schaffer, "How We Appeared to a German Poet in 1832" (in *Texas Review*, 1916).—G. A. Mülfinger, "Lenau in America" (in *Americana Germanica* VI, no. 2, 1897).—Th. S. Baker, *Lenau and Young Germany in America* (Diss. 1897).

<sup>3</sup> A. Grün, *Nikolaus Lenau, Lebensgeschichtliche Umriss*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Schurz, *op. cit.*, I, 114.

there, he said, he felt that he could accomplish more in his profession, even for Europe, than he could do here. He is going to enter into connections with the learned men of his profession in Germany and England and to settle down in Philadelphia and deliver lectures on his specialties, pathology and psychology, which are there still in an entirely rudimentary stage."<sup>5</sup> Bischoff rejects the views of certain modern critics, such as Rahmer and Sadger, according to which Lenau's plan of emigration resulted from a "Zwangsidee" or "unglaubliche Kindlichkeit" or, as Castle thinks, from an unfavorable influence of the Swabians, who did not understand the poet's character, and he is of the opinion: "Actually Lenau only did what before him thousands of his contemporaries have done; he followed a general trend of his time which just in Swabia was stronger than elsewhere."<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of 1832 Lenau's financial conditions had improved. An invested capital of five thousand Gulden made him a member of a "Stuttgarter Aktiengesellschaft zum Auswandern," which secured him a thousand acres of American land. When the financial motives of his emigration plan became of minor value for him, the idea of his intended journey to America took on more and more poetic and imaginative forms. What a gain would it be for the children of his muse, he thought, for the development of his lyric genius, if he could live for some time in that mysterious paradise with its exotic splendor of color, its primeval forests, mighty streams, and thundering cataracts, of which Duden had given such fascinating descriptions! This traveler and writer, the real originator of the German emigration movement of the nineteenth century, had deeply impressed the poet. He warmly recommended Duden's fantastic accounts of America to his relatives in Vienna, if in imagination they

<sup>5</sup> Ernst, *Lenaus Frauengestalten*, p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> Bischoff, *Nikol. Lenaus Lyrik*, etc., I, 257.

wanted to follow him on his journey into the New World.<sup>7</sup> On the 13th of March, 1832, he writes from Weinsberg to his friend Mayer that, if he likes it in America, he intends to stay there five years. "There I will train my imagination in the school of the primeval forests." The same idea is expressed a few days later to Schurz in a letter from Heidelberg, and he adds: "I want to hear the Niagara roar and to sing Niagara songs. That belongs necessarily to my training. All my poetry is wrapped up in nature, and in America nature is more beautiful, more powerful than in Europe. An immense supply of the most splendid pictures awaits me there, an abundance of divine scenes (eine Fülle göttlicher Auftritte), a nature which still lies primitive and untouched, like the soil of the primeval forests. I promise myself from it a wonderful effect upon my soul. The voyage on a steamship is very fast and without danger; in America itself one travels with entire safety, for beggars and thieves are not found there, because man can procure his bread in more comfortable ways. I shall stay there about two months and then immensely enriched return to my beloved Austria. Perhaps along with the New World a new world will reveal itself in my poetry. How beautiful is even the name Niagara, Niagara, Niagara!"<sup>8</sup> In the same letter he refers to the "quiet, meditative, wonderful flower-trees," and to the "sacred shades of the primeval forest." He wants to depart in the beginning of May and to return in the late fall of the same year.

Entirely different from this original romantic conception of America was the impression which Lenau gained in the country itself. On August 1, 1832, he embarked in Amsterdam. The hardships of the sea-voyage, the cholera in Baltimore, the behavior of the Americans at dinner in a hotel of that

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Schurz, March 16, 1832.

<sup>8</sup> Schurz, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 158, 162.



city quickly depressed his spirits. On October 16, eight days after his landing in Baltimore, he recorded his first impressions in a letter to Schurz, in which he sums up his first unhappy experiences: "The American has no wine, no nightingale. Brother, these Americans are incredibly loathsome, small-merchant souls (himmelanstinkende Krämerseelen). Dead, stone-dead to all enjoyments of the mind and heart are they. The nightingale is right not to stay with these fellows. I think it is extremely and seriously significant that America has no nightingale. It seems to me like a poetic curse. A Niagara-voice is necessary to teach these rascals that there are higher goods than those that are struck off in the mint."<sup>9</sup>

From Baltimore Lenau set out for the farm which he had purchased in Crawford county in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The severe winter of 1832-33, partly spent in Rapp's social community Economy, near Pittsburgh, and a heavy cold, which he caught riding on horseback through the Urwald, deepened his melancholy. What he finds in America is a rough climate and rough people, the latter the more repugnant, as their roughness is of a tame sort. "I have not yet seen there a courageous dog, a high-mettled horse, a man of passion," he writes on March 5 from Lisbon, Ohio, to Emilie Reinbeck. The German immigrants made a particularly disagreeable impression upon him. Influenced by the disappointing experiences through which they had passed in this country, their former ideals have vanished, the poet notes. "In the great misty land of America the veins of love are slowly opened; love bleeds to death unnoticed."<sup>10</sup> Just as nature in America is torpid and cold, and the formation of the country monotonous and lacking in fantasy, so also man here has no voice for song, the dejected poet writes to Joseph Klemm in Vienna on March

<sup>9</sup> Schurz, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>10</sup> Schurz, p. 204.

6. America's fair sex made no marked impression upon the poet; it could, he thinks, never become dangerous to the peace of his mind; but he praises the deep respect and the gallantry which American husbands display toward their wives. The education of the Americans is, in Lenau's opinion, purely mercantile and technical. "Here the practical man is revealed in all his fearful banality."<sup>11</sup> Agriculture in America is still in a very crude state, and commerce is rapidly decaying, "because it rests entirely upon forced credit." As to political and national life in America, the Republic's ideas of liberty did not appeal to our poet, and he doubted whether the United States could ever look toward a happy future. "What we call 'Fatherland' is here only 'property insurance,' and in consequence the state is no spiritual, moral institution, but a mere material convention."<sup>12</sup> To ease or luxury of life the American does not pay much attention. The streets, the houses, the beds are ill adapted to promote human comfort and convenience.

In the spring of 1833 Lenau visited Niagara Falls. This too, although it impressed him much, fell short of his expectations. From the Falls he followed the Erie Canal and the Hudson valley to the City of New York, whence he returned to Austria in the early part of May.

The general effect which the journey produced upon the poet was that of a terrible disappointment. The American landscape, from which he had expected so much, had impressed him only for three things: "that now almost extinct primeval forest in the more westerly regions of Ohio, the Hudson valley, and the Niagara."<sup>13</sup> "My stay in the New World," he declared to Marie von Hünersdorff on August 16, "has cured me of the chimera of liberty and independence which I idolized with

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Schurz, p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> Schurz, p. 212.

youthful enthusiasm. I have convinced myself there that true liberty rests only in our breast, in our will and thinking, our feeling and doing."<sup>14</sup> It is not hard to understand why Lenau felt so keenly disappointed. From the beginning he was interested only in an ideal America. This, he hoped, would be a poetic inspiration for him. But when the realities of the political and cultural life of the young nation confronted him, he saw in drab and prosy America the greatest possible contrast to his own ideal. "This super-sensitive son of European culture," says Schaffer, "had deluded himself with the belief that the goal of his wishes would be reached in a life as a farmer in the primeval forests of the New World."<sup>15</sup> Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the resulting impression was an icy bath of disillusionment.

Lenau's conceptions of America before and during his journey are reflected in a number of poems which he composed while he was considering the journey and after it had become a reality. The idea of an intended visit to the United States and Lenau's romantic views about the New World appear, for the first time, in a political poem, entitled "Abschied" (Lied eines auswandernden Portugiesen), published at the beginning of 1832. In this poem, which was written during his visit to Swabia, but reflects a spirit which was already voiced by Lenau in his university years,<sup>16</sup> the poet touches only upon the political ideals of his journey. It is America, the traditional land of freedom, that the emigrant greets:

Du neue Welt, du freie Welt,  
An deren blütenreichem Strand  
Die Flut der Tyrannei zerschellt:  
Ich grüsse dich, mein Vaterland.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Schurz, p. 224.

<sup>15</sup> Schaffer, "How We Appeared to a German Poet in 1832," p. 332f.

<sup>16</sup> See note 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Lenaus Werke*, I, 95.

The spirit of Duden's nature sketches speaks in the "Maskenball," which also appeared at the beginning of 1832. Here the romantic motive is predominant. The poet hails American scenery as "heilige Waldverliesse" and "der Freiheit Paradiese, wo noch kein Tyrann sich Throne schlug."<sup>18</sup> Then he goes on:

Wandeln will ich durch die Hallen,  
 Wo die Schauer Gottes wallen,  
 Wo in wunderbarer Pracht  
 Himmelwärts die Bäume dringen,  
 Ihre Riesenarme schwingen.

The next lines contain an unmistakable reflection of those highly florid nature pictures of Duden with which the poet was familiar:

Wo Leuchtkäfer, Myriaden,  
 Um die Schlingeblumen fliegen,  
 Die sich an die Bäume schmiegen;  
 Auf des Blühens dunklen Pfaden  
 Leuchten sie in Duftgewinden.

There the emigrant hopes to rest his weary soul, and to find relief for his grief—

In der Vögel Melodeien,  
 In des Raubtiers wildem Schreien;  
 Und im Niagararauschen.<sup>19</sup>

The other poems referring to America were composed during the return journey and in the retrospective years that immediately followed. In two of them ("Niagara" and "Verschiedene Deutung") he seeks a poetic realization of the mighty Niagara from which Lenau had expected so great an influence upon his imagination; but it can hardly be said that he has succeeded in giving in a powerful and convincing manner

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> *Lenaus Werke*, I, 118.



the impressions produced by the mighty cataract. In the "Indianerzug" he voices the lament of the American aborigines whose forests are burned down by the white men to force the Indians from their grounds, and in "Die drei Indianer" he reflects despair at the cruel treatment which drives them to death in the floods of the Niagara.

Fluch den Weissen! ihren letzten Spuren!  
 Jeder Welle Fluch, worauf sie fuhren,  
 Die, einst Bettler, unsern Strand erklettert!  
 Fluch dem Windhauch, dienstbar ihrem Schiffe!  
 Hundert Flüche jedem Felsenriffe,  
 Das sie nicht hat in den Grund geschmettert.

Täglich über's Meer in wilder Eile  
 Fliegen ihre Schiffe, gift'ge Pfeile,  
 Treffen unsre Küste mit Verderben.  
 Nichts hat uns die Räuberbrut gelassen  
 Als im Herzen tödlich bittres Hassen,—  
 Kommt, ihr Kinder, kommt, wir wollen sterben!

Laut ununterbroch'ne Donner krachen,  
 Blitze flattern um den Todesrachen,  
 Ihn umtaumeln Möven, sturmesmunter;  
 Und die Männer kommen, fest entschlossen,  
 Singend, schon dem Falle zugeschritten,  
 Stürzen jetzt den Katarakt hinunter.<sup>20</sup>

It has been pointed out by Bischoff that recent German and American scholars, such as Castle and Mülfinger, have been influenced by the French "Lenauforschung" to an unfavorable criticism of Lenau's Indian poems, with their romantic atmosphere, calling them "declamations after the fashion of a past epoch." Bischoff, however, disagrees with the views of these critics and refers to a passage in Caroline Pichler's *Zeitbilder*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Lenaus Werke*, I, 187.

<sup>21</sup> C. Pichler, *Zeitbilder*, II, 414. Cf. Bischoff, *Nikol. Lenaus Lyrik*, etc., I, 314ff., 791.

(1844) in order to prove that the spirit of Lenau's Indian poems was not at all out of line with the Austrian attitude of mind at this time. The persecution of the Indian, declares this contemporary authoress, was a favorite topic of conversation in the "Wiener Salons" in the thirties. "And then, this inhuman oppression of all colored people in America, this aristocracy of the skin! The cruel tricks which they allow themselves in the free States in order to rob the poor native Indians of their country, of the soil which belonged to their fathers. It is a shame, how they are pushed more and more westwards towards the sea, taking with them the bones of their forefathers." Evidently Lenau followed only a still vigorous romantic tradition when he idealized the Indians.

In the "Blockhaus" the poet presents a personal experience which he had, when he found shelter on a stormy winter-night in the house of an American settler in the primeval forest. He says of the American winter:

Winter war's, ich starrte vom Urwaldfroste,<sup>22</sup>

and describes the unemotional but hospitable reception with which he met, and the curiosity of the son of the American, who wondered at the enormous baggage that Lenau used to carry along.

The keen disappointment which the poet felt when his high expectations of America were not realized, found pessimistic expression in the poem "Der Urwald," also composed after his return home. He is still in a temper when he recalls those cold and dreary winter months on his farm. All that he knows of America is:

Es ist ein Land voll träumerischem Trug,  
Auf das die Freiheit im Vorüberflug  
Bezaubernd ihren Schatten fallen lässt,

<sup>22</sup> *Lenaus Werke*, I, 242.

Und das ihn hält in tausend Bildern fest;  
 Wohin das Unglück flüchtet ferneher,  
 Und das Verbrechen zittert über's Meer,  
 Das Land, bei dessen lockendem Verheissen  
 Die Hoffnung oft vom Sterbelager sprang  
 Und ihr Panier durch alle Stürme schwang,  
 Um es am fernen Strande zu zerreißen,  
 Und dort den zwiefach bittern Tod zu haben;  
 Die Heimat hätte weicher sie begraben.<sup>23</sup>

This American Urwald, which, he thought, would be an inspiration for his poetic art, was now for him only a symbol of decay and the futility of all earthly things, and he feared from it a harmful influence upon his mind and imagination. He says:

Wo sind die Blüten, die den Wald umschlangen?  
 Wo sind die Vögel, die hier lustig sangen?—  
 Längst sind die Blüten und die Vögel fort;  
 Nun ist der Wald verlassen und verdorrt.  
 So sind vielleicht gar bald auch mir verblüht  
 Die schönen Ahnungsblumen im Gemüt;  
 Und ist der Wuchs des Lebens mir verdorrt,  
 Sind auch die Vögel, meine Lieder, fort;  
 Dann bin ich still und tot, wie dieser Baum,  
 Der Seele Frühling war, wie seiner—Traum.<sup>24</sup>

Summing up, we find that Lenau, influenced by the prevailing ideas of his time and by the power of his imagination, was entirely prepossessed by the fantastic conceptions of the Romanticists, idealizing America as the land of unrestrained political liberty, primitive nature, and grandiose scenery, as the home-land of the uncivilized, but friendly Indian, doomed with his race to extinction. It was inevitable that, when the poet crossed the Atlantic, his sensitive and melancholy character was a severe handicap for a true appreciation and under-

<sup>23</sup> *Lenaus Werke*, I, 237.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

standing of the real conditions in America, and that to his delicate taste the primitive state of American culture was simply repulsive. However comprehensible his disappointment and irritation was, Lenau's presentation of America is, we must admit, a not very convincing or illuminating chapter in German literature on America in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In marked contrast with the gloomy presentation of America by this poet of Weltschmerz appears the bright and friendly view which we find in the poems of his friend and fellow-countryman Anastasius Grün (Anton Alexander Graf von Auersperg). As early as the year 1831, in the *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*, he calls to a friend who is emigrating:

Grüsse mir den fremden Strand,  
Wo einst Franklin Weisheit säte,  
Washington einst fechtend stand.<sup>25</sup>

He asks him what allured him so strongly in the New World; whether he saw in it "the sublime beacon of right," or the "mercy-seat of liberty," the "Madonna of our time." He compares the great emigration movement towards the West with the Crusades to the Holy Land and voices his apprehension that the emigrants would meet with the same disillusionment as the pious pilgrims in the Middle Ages:

Euer Heiland ist erstanden  
Und ihr trefft ein leeres Grab.<sup>26</sup>

Desperate over the frequent vexations by the Austrian government, which found fault with his liberal political views, in the spring of 1835, the poet himself considered the idea of emigrating to America; until 1838, indeed, this plan continually

<sup>25</sup> *Grüns Werke*, ed. by Castle, I, 159.

<sup>26</sup> *Grüns Werke*, ed. by Castle, I, 157.



occupied his mind.<sup>27</sup> Evidently he informed himself in detail about transatlantic conditions. In Italy, which he visited in the winter of 1834-35, he had been impressed by the ruins of the ancient world. Thus, the idea entered his mind to contrast the extinguished culture of that country with the youthful, vital, rising spirit of the new continent. He carried out his plan by sketching a series of Neapolitan and American "Kulturbilder," which he published in the autumn of 1835 as part of a lyric-epic poem *Schutt* under the title "Cincinnatus."

Against the mast of the "Cincinnatus," which floats in the bay of Naples, an American sailor is leaning. Over his head wave the Stars and Stripes, and in viewing all the glory of the past which lies before his eyes in dust and ruins, his mind fares away on the rays of the setting sun to his own distant native land:

Land! Land! o meines Vaterlands Gestade!  
Willkommen Baltimores schöner Strand;  
Der mit den grünen Armen die Najade,  
Das Meer, als seine süsse Braut umspannt.<sup>28</sup>

He sends his greetings to the Susquehanna, to Washington's monument, to the American forest, "Königsriesen, umwallt von farb'ger Ranken blüh'ndem Reis," to the mighty streams carrying steamboats up through Urwald and savanna, to the cities, "über Nacht entsprossen schnelle," and to the lonely plantations, scattered over the vast country and offering with their foliage and healing herbs a soothing refuge for grief-stricken hearts. Furthermore, he thinks of the American pioneer, winning wild nature for culture and civilization:

Wehklagend flieht der Urwald immer weiter,  
Bison entstürzt und Panther mit Geheul,

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Grüns Werke*, ed. by Castle, I, pp. xxxix, xlvii, 174. Also Schlosser edition, I, 106.

<sup>28</sup> *Grüns Werke*, ed. by Castle, I, 228.

Und hinter ihnen schwingt triumphesheiter  
Der Mensch, obsiegend der Natur, das Beil.

All these features reveal to the poet the new and flourishing life which, through its conquest of the wilderness, grows up everywhere, even out of the tombs of ancient times:

Pompeji gab des Tods Zypressenhalme,  
Amerika des Lebens Rosenglanz.<sup>29</sup>

Then the American sailor extols the Ohio, beside which stands his father's house. His father is a German settler, a model of thrift and honesty. Humorously Grün's American describes the celebration of the Fourth of July in Pittsburgh, with its "Wachtparade," and recalls the Urwald with the red man, who can only with difficulty be induced to part with his tomahawk while negotiating peace with the representatives of the white men. Particularly striking is the description of the scene where the emigrants, having crossed the Atlantic with their various hopes and expectations, arrive in America and thankfully grasp the hand which the hospitable New World extends to them:

Willkommen Fremdling! Sprich, was tut dir not?  
Verlangst du Brot? Sieh, meine Frucht ist Brot;  
Und dürstet dich, trink meinen Palmenwein;  
Ich will dir Acker, Quell und Weinberg sein.<sup>30</sup>

Then the sailor departs from Europe, the wealth of which, he thinks, is the source of all its misfortunes, and he calls on America to alleviate, as much as possible, the sufferings of the Old World. In a final appeal he addresses both continents:

Schlingt Hand in Hand, lasst Haupt am Haupte lehnen,  
Ihr Schwestern, euch zu Füßen Meeresglanz!  
Es stehn die Kronen, die Europa krönen,  
Gut an Amerikas laubgrünem Kranz.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Grün's Werke*, I, 229.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>31</sup> *Grün's Werke*, I, 253.

In contrast with Lenau, who, as we saw, complained that the German settlers in the new country lost their national pride and their love of the Fatherland, Grün exclaims:

O Deutscher, deine Heimatlieb ist gleich  
Dem Feuerwein, an Duft und Gluten reich,  
Der, wenn er durch die weiten Meere zog  
Nur höh're Glut und neue Würzen sog.<sup>32</sup>

But like Lenau the poet regrets that the song of the German nightingale is not heard in the American forests:

Die Ros' am Fenster glüht im Widerschein,  
Sie nickt wohl grüssend in die Nacht hinein,  
Doch dünkt mich in dem blütenreichen All  
Fehlt ihr die heimisch deutsche Nachtigall.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, in these charming descriptions Grün presents us pictures of great artistic beauty and brilliant coloring. Never before in German poetry had American nature and the country-life of the Western world, with its characteristic features, been extolled in verse of such quality. But although the poet follows the Romantic tradition in pointing to America as the land of the future, as compared with Europe's dying culture, he is far from taking too rosy a view of the conditions in the New World and from idealizing them completely. "Of the too favorable conception," says Andreas Zeehe, "which prevailed in Germany about America in the thirties on account of unfavorable domestic conditions, Grün shows himself free."<sup>34</sup> The poet does not conceal that in this country, too, many defects and imperfections can be found. The contentment of the prosperous immigrant is frequently disturbed through a sentimental longing

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>34</sup> Zeehe, "Anastasius Grüns Schutt" (in the *Jahresbericht des Laibacher Gymnasiums*, 1881, p. 19).

for the old Fatherland; republican partisanship easily leads to unjust criticism of monarchical institutions; slavery is incompatible with the recognition of the rights of man; the deep-rooted racial hatred, prevailing between the white man and the Indians, and the neglect of scientific studies and artistic tendencies are not a credit to America, but place it behind Europe. Thus, in this later work, Grün had in view a similar picture of America to that which he had already drawn in the poem "Einem auswandernden Freunde" in the *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*, and we may assume that Lenau's accounts of America had a not inconsiderable influence on his fellow-poet in the views expressed in *Schutt*. In contrast with Sealsfield, who paid a glowing tribute to American institutions, and with Lenau, who, embittered, spoke slightly of them, Grün passes a juster and more unprejudiced judgment.

Among Austrian writers Adalbert Stifter, a son of the Bohemian Forest, is best known as the author of the *Studien* (1844-1850), a collection of idyls and short stories in which he reveals his warm sympathy for nature, especially for the forest. In a previous chapter we have already referred to the fact that Cooper's genius was an inspiration for Stifter's *Waldesdichtung*. The sturdy, primitive wood-cutters in the novels of the Austrian writer are not dissimilar to the settlers in the American Urwald. Sauer thinks "the brilliant descriptions of the forest and the heath in Charles Sealsfield's novels scarcely remained unknown to Stifter," and traces in detail Cooper's influence upon Stifter's works. Summing up his discussion of this influence he says: "The North American novelist, although as an artist he stood far lower than his German imitator, has fructified the imagination of Stifter in a hundred ways: he awakened to vigorous life the recollections of the earliest impressions of childhood which slumbered in him; furthermore, he suggested to him the poetical utilization of the



landscape long since familiar to him, and thus, out of the fusion of strange and foreign suggestions with the knowledge of his own native country and the experiences of his own heart, Stifter's peculiar poetic art arose."<sup>35</sup>

Not unfamiliar to Stifter was, furthermore, the conception of the Romanticists, who had presented America as the land of primitive nature and vitality, the fountain of youth for the weary minds of Old Europe. To be sure, a detailed account of American life and nature is lacking in Stifter's novels, but the romantic ideas of the New World are clearly reflected in them. "The longing for distant countries, for the New World, lived also in Stifter's heart," says Sauer,<sup>36</sup> "and he lent it to the characters of his earlier novels. In youthful enthusiasm the disciple of Klopstock exclaims in a letter (1837) that he would like to throw himself arm-in-arm with his bride-to-be into the Niagara." In Stifter's *Kondor* the artist crosses the Atlantic to seek rest and inspiration in the primeval forests of America. Also in the *Feldblumen* America is not only the land of dreams for the hero of the novel, but the circumstances that lead up to the beginning of the story take place partly in the New World. In spite of his technique, with its realistic and even microscopic descriptions of nature and life, in regard to America Stifter has not outgrown the conception of the Romanticists.

Franz Grillparzer was another Austrian writer who with every fiber of his heart was attached to his beloved Fatherland and suffered heavily under the stagnation of political life in his country. We learn from his "Dramatische Pläne und Studien"<sup>37</sup> (1837) that he informed himself about the history of

<sup>35</sup> A. Sauer, "Über den Einfluss der nordam. Literatur auf die deutsche" (*Jahrb. d. Grillparzergesellschaft*, XVI, 26 ff.). Cf. also *Stifters Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Sauer, I, p. xlvii ff.

<sup>36</sup> *Jahrbuch der Grillparzergesellschaft*, XVI, 31.

<sup>37</sup> *Grillparzers Werke*, X, 350.

the American War for Independence and was particularly interested in the episode of General Arnold's betrayal, an account of which he found in Bran's *Miscellen* (1837).<sup>38</sup>

In the seventh chapter of his *Satiren* (1820), which contains the "Korrespondenzgeschichten aus dem Lande der Irokesen," Grillparzer ridicules the sentimental and ideal presentation of the Indians which for decades had maintained its place in German literature. This satire seems to be a "Tendenzschrift" directed against imitation of the Romanticists, and attacking one of their favorite ideals. From Onondaga in the country of the Iroquois a German immigrant, on April 1, 1820, writes a letter to a friend in the Fatherland, telling him how much he enjoys life among the aborigines. He wants to stay with them forever, because he has found there what in Germany is still in its initial stage: national feeling, popular education, patriotic life. He describes his pleasure when he, in the evening, under the very old oak trees, smokes his pipe in the company of his "noble hosts" and drinks beer out of the skulls of slain Frenchmen and Englishmen; how, then, the skin is stripped off from the prisoners of war and the Shaman finally recites weird legends, "wunderlich und wunderbar und wunderschaurig." "O friend," he exclaims, "compared with this, what are your clubs, your societies, your circles! Away with it! I must stop, otherwise my blood boils." He defends the struggle of the Indians for the protection of their nationality, a cause that discredits them in Europe as barbaric and horrible, and he points out how difficult it is for them to resist the temptations which the Europeans offer them along with the culture of the Old World. The propagation of the Christian religion among

<sup>38</sup> *Miscellen*, a widely read and popular magazine, ed. by Dr. Fr. Alex. Bran in Hamburg at the end of the 18th century. In the issues the editor discusses various geographical and historical topics of his time.—In the "Studien zur Literatur" (about 1850; *Grillparzers Werke*, XIII, 140) Grillparzer discusses Lope de Vega's drama *Nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristobal Colon*.

them was of no avail. Their purely spiritual religion is full of mystic symbols: their supreme god, Dschingdschang, is presented as a winged triangle with seven feet, five necks, and fourteen heads; love as a "parallelopipedon"; the god of war under the form of a fire-stone; the god of wisdom as the squaring of the circle. They kill foreigners and consider themselves the first nation of the world. The writer concludes his report by saying: "I bless the hour of my first coming into their circle. Farewell, next time more, if my description should not rather entice you to come yourself, to convince yourself, to enjoy with me."<sup>39</sup>

In his *Historische und politische Schriften* Grillparzer voices, in 1844, the opinion, "the discovery of America and Christianity have not yet ceased because effects of these phenomena still continue," and, similarly, he notes in 1861 that the discovery of America, which at the beginning affected merely the currency of the precious metals, would change the relation of the continents to one another in the next century.<sup>40</sup> In his "Erinnerungen aus dem Jahre 1848" he states that the American Revolution, like that of the French, proceeded more or less "from a necessity, from a danger to natural interests, from a menace to all that exists."<sup>41</sup>

Grillparzer's references to America are interesting for us in several respects. We notice that the poet closely studied the historical past of our Republic and, with a sympathetic mind, followed its mighty development. We observe, furthermore, that in his views about America, scarce as they are, romantic ideas have no place, and that in him the sentimental conception of the Indians found its strongest opponent. From this fact it appears that the Romantic conception of the American abor-

<sup>39</sup> *Grillparzers Werke*, X, 388.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, XI ("Studien zur Philosophie u. Geschichte"), p. 58.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 171.

igines did not remain unchallenged in German literature in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century and that as early as 1820, this conception was strongly opposed.

We have seen that most of the Austrian writers in referring to America show a strong influence of Romantic ideas. Stifter was so impressed by the reading of Cooper's and Sealsfield's novels that his *Waldesdichtung* became a gem of German literature. Feuchtersleben and Sealsfield pointed out to their countrymen that America was the land of the free, in contrast with the political situation at home. Grün depicted American country-life with its various aspects and characteristic features, with its wholesome atmosphere, but also with its defects. Grillparzer corrected the wrong impression which the romantic conception of the American Indian had produced throughout Europe. Particularly noteworthy in Sealsfield, Grün, and Grillparzer are the realism and the sympathy with which they presented the conditions in this country to their contemporaries in Germany and Austria.



## CHAPTER VI

### ROMANTIC-REALISTIC LITERATURE

We have already stated that under the influence of Scott's novels new tendencies began to appear in German literature in the third decade of the nineteenth century. In addition, the rising spirit of a new age, the age of industrialism, science and the technical arts strongly emphasized the practical needs and tasks of the modern man. As a consequence, a number of German writers, although still influenced by romantic ideas, turned more and more to a description of the realities of life and to the actual conditions of their time. This change of viewpoint became important also for the presentation of America. Sealsfield, Gerstäcker, Grün, and Grillparzer have already been mentioned as representatives of these new principles. They were joined by such writers as Alexis, Spindler, Biernatzki, Immermann, Freiligrath, in whose references to America we shall find a marked progress away from the fantastic conception of the Romanticists toward the saner views of the Realists.

At the beginning of his literary career, Willibald Alexis (Wilhelm Häring) still shared the views of German academic youth, who dreamed of America as the ideal land of political liberty. These views are reflected in the novel *Walladmor* (1823). The action of the story takes place in Wales at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Dulberry, a political reformer, complains to his friend Bertram about England's reactionary policies, especially about the spy-system applied by the government, and declares that he will not stay in the country any longer. He points across the sea toward America and exclaims: "From there our salvation will come. How fine it would be to

die there with hope before us!"<sup>1</sup> While James Nichols, a smuggler, is awaiting execution in the prison of Walladmor, Toms, an audacious youth, visits him and advises him to escape and sail to America. Finally, the squire discovers in Nichols his own son, who had been kidnapped in his youth; but the father refuses to take him back to his castle, since the son has become a desperate criminal. This Nichols understands and he declares that he intends to depart for distant lands to take part in the revolution in South America. From there his father would hear of deeds which would not disgrace his name, or he would get news which would reconcile his son with everyone.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of years Alexis came to a better understanding of the vital forces which were active in his time, particularly in America. In addition, during the decade succeeding the publication of *Walladmor*, a number of German books on travel in America as well as translations of Irving's and Cooper's works appeared, from which literature the author could get better information about conditions in the New World. This progress in his views is reflected in a passage of his novel *Cabanis* (1832), the first of his *Vaterländische Romane*. The action of the novel belongs to the time of Frederick the Great. We hear from the Marquis of Cabanis that he would be pleased to have his friend, the army-surgeon, go to America, for he is "an honorable specimen, fit for land-service and sea-service, of an imperturbable equanimity of mind." Then the marquis goes on: "Let able men, a few clever heads more go across to America, and it must become a state full of men, upright, earnest, active, without prejudice,—its first law: to be useful."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the writer describes the deep impression which the news of the liberal tendencies and of the work of colonization

<sup>1</sup> *Walladmor*, I, 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 322.

<sup>3</sup> W. Häring, *Vaterländische Romane*, VI, 694.

in the New World made upon the Old at that period: "The restoration of the Stuarts, the Capetains, even the whole world seemed to be forgotten on account of a new idea. The word 'America' often came from the lips of the marquis; in the royal library he informed himself regarding the peculiar conditions in that country, and told the countess with delight about the quiet, industrious settlements in the vast primeval forests in America, where the axe of a European had never been swung, where there was no nobility, no titles, no medals, and where the necessities of life brought man back to the state of original equality."<sup>4</sup>

How completely Alexis had dismissed from his mind his former ideal conception of America and familiarized himself with the real conditions in this country is further shown by the views expressed in a novel, "Die Flucht nach Amerika," which appeared in 1848 in the *Urania, Taschenbuch für Literatur*. Theodor, the main character of the story, is a German political refugee of the upper classes, and wants to emigrate to America in order to avoid arrest by the authorities. Angelica, his wife, wishes to accompany him across the sea. However, the captain of the freighter on which the passage is to be made refuses to take him along and refers him to the ship-owner. The latter tries to induce the refugee to abandon his plans, and points to the difficulties which he would encounter in carrying out his intended flight. He says to him: "Look at your soft fingers, with their precious rings, and then think of the life in the Urwälder. Only your hands will help you there; your European liberal principles are of as little value in the United States as German timber in Canada. All our revolutionists who fled across the Atlantic have perished there."<sup>5</sup> Finally, the baron succeeds in obtaining permission to make the

<sup>4</sup> Häring, *Vaterl. Romane*, VI, 696.

<sup>5</sup> *Urania*, 1848, p. 145.

passage, but the frightful experiences he underwent during the first part of the sea-voyage constrain him and his wife, after landing on the English coast, to return immediately to Hamburg. Henceforth, they entertain no further thought of flight to America. Theodor makes up his mind to give himself up voluntarily to the authorities, and Angelica is determined to bear the separation from her husband during the time of his imprisonment. They both declare: "Now we are saved, now we are free, freer in prison than in the forests of America."<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that in this novel the traditional romantic conception of America is discarded and a reaction against it sets in. There is nothing, we are told, in the much heralded political liberty of the Western Republic, and it is better to suffer in Germany than to perish in the unstable and dangerous conditions across the sea.

One of the most prominent writers of the romantic-realistic transition period was Karl Immermann, who in his more important novels reflected the dawn of a new age. His first novel *Die Papierfenster eines Eremiten* (1822), the Werther of the nineteenth century, still shows all the characteristics of romantic idealization. Frederick, a hermit, who voices the author's own views, has undergone such awful experiences in a love affair that he became a "Weltschmerzler." He asks his friend Ludwig: "Write me your thoughts about America. Under the shade of the primeval forests, beside the thundering of the gigantic streams, amid the crash of tumbling mountain-worlds such a little love-ache will surely disappear." On the following day, however, when the hope of a new love enters his heart, he recovers from his pessimism and weariness and exclaims: "Nothing of America! Everywhere is soil and home-land. As to oases we often come to wonderfully peaceful homes."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>7</sup> *Immermanns Werke* (Hempel edition), IX, 43.



That Immermann was more or less indifferent to America is best shown by the fact that from 1822 to 1836 his works do not contain any reference to this country. Even in the *Epigonen* and in *Münchhausen* it is hardly ever mentioned. The "Zeitroman" *Die Epigonen* (1836) presents all the characteristics of the approach of a new age. In this novel the author introduces the subject of world-commerce and the figure of the "königliche Kaufmann" of his time into German literature. The writer points to the growing power of the industrialism which already played such an important part in the economic life of the United States. We learn that Immermann's aristocratic nature and artistic feeling were not at all in sympathy with this commercial spirit. Through Hermann, one of the characters of the novel, the author criticizes the businesslike arrangement of all human affairs in a new manufacturing town in Germany and expresses his antipathy against conditions such as those which particularly prevailed in the industrial life of England and America. Thus Hermann shows his aversion to the mathematical calculation of human power and human industry, to the supplanting of living things by dead ones, and thinks that the sense of beauty is entirely lacking in such conditions. "The hour ruled and the bell; according to their stroke the work-rooms were filled and emptied; the working men started on their daily ways, always in the same direction."<sup>8</sup> Karl Follen, the fanatic political dreamer in Giessen, who fled to America, is represented in Medon, another character of the novel.<sup>9</sup> Medon also takes part in the political intrigues of academic youth and is to be arrested by the government. He escapes, however, to America, where he falls a victim to the climate, to grief, and to his own fantastic ideas, and finds an early death.

<sup>8</sup> *Immermanns Werke*, ed. by Maync, IV, 22-23.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Schultess, *K. Immermann, eine Gedächtnisschrift*, pp. 104-106.

Although the action of the novel *Münchhausen* (1839) takes place in Germany and deals exclusively with conditions in that country, a few significant references to America are not lacking. At the beginning of the novel, in a sentimental idyl of the good Indians of Apapurincasiquinitschiquisaqua, the baron ridicules Alexander von Humboldt's account of his travels, which, with their flowery style and brilliant diction, often excessively idealize conditions in the New World. Furthermore, the author gives expression to the general discontent which in his time depressed the minds of his contemporaries and drove so many, weary of European culture, to an aimless wandering into distant lands. Thus, Münchhausen relates: "A few years ago I became 'europamüde'; why? I do not know myself, for nobody had done me any harm; but I became 'europamüde,' as one gets tired about eleven o'clock in the evening." He visited Africa, and soon became 'afrikamüde,' and made up his mind to go to America, after having taken a hasty trip to Germany and England.<sup>10</sup>

An investigation of Immermann brings out the fact that this writer had only a limited interest in the conditions which prevailed in this country. It is, however, significant that in his "Zeitromane" the author, far from indulging in romantic descriptions, impressively presents the newly arising social and economic problems of his time, which were particularly characteristic outgrowths of the development of political and industrial life in the United States.

We now turn to a writer who gave to the German public very picturesque and yet realistic descriptions of American life in colonial days. Carl Spindler (1796-1855), an imitator of Walter Scott's historical novels and one of the most gifted and most prolific German writers in the first half of the nineteenth century, published in 1829 the novel *Der Jesuit*. The

<sup>10</sup> *Immermanns Werke*, ed. by Maync, I, 22, 26.

action of this "Charaktergemälde" takes place in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The first part of the story leads us into the home of Senator Müssinger in a German imperial and commercial city. Justine, the daughter of the senator, is engaged to the young merchant Birsher in New York and is supposed to learn English before her wedding takes place. She cherishes the idea of "going to America, that young country," as the author says, "which the Europeans of that time imagined only as a paradise, inexhaustible in enjoyment and wealth."<sup>11</sup> A young Englishman, James, becomes her tutor. When she confesses to him her aversion for the English language, he points out to her: "In New York it would be considered a disgrace to speak another language in society than the native tongue of the English colonists."<sup>12</sup> He tells the young woman that he had spent the greater part of his boyhood on the American continent, in New York and in the country. New York itself did not appeal to him very much. "Life in the city was formal and monotonous, no gaiety, but a great deal of affected piety and military discipline. On workdays everybody is busy to excess, for everybody wants to make money. In the midst of it all the drum and the voice of the officers in command of the garrison are heard. On Sunday the Sabbath is even more strictly observed than in England. The atmosphere is filled with gloom, and the monotonous ringing of church-bells bores the citizen, until, tired of the burden of the holiday, he retires."<sup>13</sup> Country-life near New York is no more attractive. "When I must speak of free America, a tender sadness seizes me, because I liked it very much over there, although a cheerful young woman such as you are would hardly share this liking. To be sure, on the outskirts of the city you will not find a single

<sup>11</sup> Spindler, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Spindler, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

suburban villa, but only poor, flat gardens, without shade or shelter, as the military rule allows neither bushes nor houses on the outskirts of the city."<sup>14</sup> If one proceeds, however, more into the interior of the country, the scenery becomes finer. You will not find many fields cultivated by colonists, but rather "primeval forests with trees up to the skies and with much wild game." "I would often lie in the grass for hours and listen to the picking of the jay, to the barking of the fox, listening under nature's thousand-year-old columns." James then tells of the mighty streams, of the ferries crossing the rivers, and of his wanderings through the wilderness. "Flights of screeching birds whirl over the plain toward the rocks, for the setting sun stirs up a thunderstorm, which hastily approaches, quicker than that naked, red-skinned Indian who, accompanied by his dog, with gun and game-bag on his shoulder, returns at full speed from hunting, and from the stars and peaks inquires the way to the habitation of his tribe." "Bears and wolves flee along the road for long distances beside the traveler, and of discord and fight neither of them thinks amid the storm. The thunder, the lightning now complete the beautiful terrors which thrill and elevate us, but these heavenly lamps also light the way to the hut which receives us hospitably, and upon the moss-couch of which we sleep away the thunderstorm in comfortable rest."<sup>15</sup> After this report, Justine has more than enough of America and exclaims: "These forests, these wastes and streams, and most of all, these lonely block-houses, many miles away from any neighbors—I shudder to think."<sup>16</sup> Then James tells her how in these very huts patriarchal happiness is at home. When Justine insists that it is too cold and inhospitable for her in North America, he advises her to go to

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Spindler, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.



South America with its ever-bright skies, its palms and multi-colored birds, and its active, merry people.

In the second part of the novel James once declares: "I hate hypocrisy, and this sincerity is not my own virtue, but the custom in America."<sup>17</sup> The third part leads us to the hierarchical State of Paraguay in South America, where the Jesuits do missionary work among the Indians. There we again meet the main characters of the first two parts, such as the senator and his daughter, James and Birsher, who tell us of their trials and privations suffered in the struggle against the savages. At the conclusion of the story they all return to New York.

*Der Jesuit*, as we see, marks a decided progress in the literary presentation of America in the nineteenth century. The writer does not entertain us, as his predecessors did, with vague visions and ideal reflections about the New World, but paints to us a realistic picture of America's historic past, and gives us a clear idea of the conditions as they were in the city of New York and in the country at the beginning of the eighteenth century. We do not know exactly what the source of Spindler's information about these conditions was, but it appears that the reading of French and English literature on America, and especially the works of Cooper, furnished him the material for the historical background of his novel.

As the years advance, from the thirties to the forties, the characteristic features in the picture of the United States become more and more distinct in the contemporary German novel. A vigorous protest against the treatment of the negroes and the Indians by the American government and against the romantic presentation of conditions in America by German writers is found in the novel *Der braune Knabe, oder die Gemeinden in der Zerstreuung*, published in 1840, by J. C. Bier-

<sup>17</sup> Spindler, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

natzki (1795-1840), a clergyman and writer from the western coast of Schleswig. In the fifth chapter of the novel, Walter, one of the main characters, gives his friends a sketch of his life experiences. He tells them that he had seen a large part of the world and even been in America. When the ship on which he took passage entered the mouth of the Mississippi, the latter, marred by drifting tree trunks, offered to Biernatzki's hero a much more desolate sight than he had expected after Chateaubriand's picturesque and brilliant description. After his arrival in America, he took up his quarters in the house of a prosperous planter near New Orleans, where he interested himself in the condition of the slaves. There he saw that the conduct of the privileged classes in the Southern States of America was ruled mainly by material comfort and enjoyment. The ill-treatment of the negroes by the whites particularly displeased him. He says: "In the southern provinces the lynch-law, applied to the slaves, is so cruel that every interest shown on behalf of the negroes is severely punished, and even every attempt to bring them the consolations of the gospel in their misery. Slavery is the poison which, with its blight, dries up every pure, warm, and true sympathy."<sup>18</sup> Also in other respects the Americans are presented in a very unfavorable light. The materialism of the American dollar-chasers appears in sharp contrast to the romantic pictures of earlier decades. Biernatzki's German traveler reports: "In the Northern States there prevails in all directions a principle of utility which would like to put a water-wheel under the Falls of the Niagara, and a thirst for gain and profit rages through all veins from the poor settler to the most powerful hero of the Exchange. You look for the young blossom of a new humanity in America,—you will find social forms and civil institutions which do not restrain and crush the growth of such a blossom; but you will find

<sup>18</sup> Biernatzki, *op. cit.*, V, 156.

a race that does not have a sound core in itself, a race that calculates rather than feels, a blossom rich in opalescent colors, poor in sweet fragrance, a spirit which strives outwards with all its powers and does not care whether a sanctuary is left to it in its breast for those mysteries which do not reveal themselves in the bustle of life, but only in the soul.”<sup>19</sup> Very unfavorable is Walter’s criticism of the injustice done to the Indians as well as the emotional extravagances at the religious camp meetings. Soon the traveler has to leave the plantation on account of his friendly feelings toward the negroes. He goes up the Mississippi and is loud in praise of the beautiful plantations which he passes. He stops at another negro colony, is present at a “Congo-dance,” and is soon recognized as the well-known friend of the slaves among the white people. Again he complains of the cruel fate to which the blacks are exposed, and exclaims: “O America! Land of liberty! O honored Congress of a free people who wilt not allow even a petition of the slaves or their friends on thy green table. Thou dost not care for the intense contempt of a son of old Europe which in thy opinion is mouldering into the darkness of oblivion, and yet this contempt shall mark all the charming pictures which thou drawest before our eyes of thy political life. There is a rotten core in the root of thy fast growing blossom. Consuming selfishness is devouring thy freedom.”<sup>20</sup> Then Walter takes a trip to the Red River. There he is present at the peace negotiations between the American government and the aborigines, and considers the treaties a miserable tissue of deceit and injustice on the part of the government. Furthermore, he notes that the earlier romantic writers idealized the Indians, who themselves were tainted with many vices, as he had noticed while living among them.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>20</sup> Biernatzki, *op. cit.*, p. 183

Biernatzki expresses in his novel, as we see, a pronounced aversion against the political and cultural life of America. He challenges the judgment of those writers who presented this country only in a favorable light. He criticizes the American government for its attitude toward the negroes and Indians and finds fault with the materialistic spirit which, in his opinion, prevails in the national life of the Republic. Obviously, he sometimes goes too far in his criticism of conditions in America and in showing only the dark sides of life in our country; but it cannot be denied that his presentation of these conditions is much more realistic and nearer the truth than the traditional conception of the Romanticists. To a cultured German, especially to one who got his information from descriptions of disappointed travelers in the United States, America really presented such a picture as is drawn by the writer of our novel. Living on an island in the North Sea, he had many an opportunity to hear and read about America; and, as an apostle of love, he may have been too easily inclined to listen to accounts of inhuman treatment of the black race across the sea.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most noted German poets of this romantic-realistic transition period was Ferdinand Freiligrath. At the beginning of his literary career, in Amsterdam (1832-1836), he professed a romantic cosmopolitanism. In the midst of that great metropolis with many of the characteristics of a transatlantic seaport, he breathed the atmosphere of foreign countries and of exotic nature. He roamed in imagination to the deserts of Africa and to the ancient dreamland of the caliphs as well as to the prairies of the American Indians. Schmidt-Weissenfels says of him in regard to those years: "His mind took a delight in the conditions of the wilderness in those countries where nature is still primitive. It was as if he wanted

<sup>21</sup> The hatred of the black race toward the Europeans is strongly expressed by the negro Berdoa in Grabbe's drama *Herzog Theodor von Gothland* (1822).



to turn away from the reality in which he lived, and, guided by an instinct for freedom, to move to distant deserts and forests, to palms and the kraals of the Hottentots, to lions and savages."<sup>22</sup> The multitude of emigrants whom he saw in the harbor departing for western shores turned his eyes across the sea to the land of liberty which they sought.

The romantic sentiment of the poet's earlier years finds effective expression in the poem "Die Auswanderer" (1832), where in imagination he follows the Schwarzwald immigrant across the ocean to the shores of the Missouri and pictures the longing for home that will not die amid the primeval forests and the cornlands of the West. In another poem, "Tod des Führers" (1835), he alludes to political liberty as the motive that was driving thousands to America.

Dorten lasst uns Hütten bauen,  
Wo die Freiheit hält das Lot.  
Dort lasst unsern Schweiss uns säen,  
Wo, kein totes Korn, er liegt.  
Dort lasst uns die Scholle wenden  
Wo die Garben holt, wer pflügt.<sup>23</sup>

In the poem "Florida of Boston" (1833) Freiligrath describes an American ship docking in the harbor of Amsterdam. At the mizzen-mast he sees "der freien Staaten rotstreif'ge Flagge," greeting the flags of the Hansards, Danes and Dutch, and he says of the Stars and Stripes:

Der weissen Sterne Schein glänzt in der blauen Feldung,  
Sie bringt der alten Welt von einer neuen Meldung.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, the poet tells us of the various scenes which the *Florida* witnessed on its voyages; how it passed the

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Ferd. Freiligrath, ein biographisches Denkmal*, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, I, 55.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Gulf Stream and scared the flamingo flying from the South to the Ohio and Lake Erie to build his nest among the thrifty colonists.

Freiligrath was so dissatisfied with his position as a clerk in a commercial house in Amsterdam that sometimes the thought of going to America entered his mind. Thus he wrote to his mother on the 8th of May, 1835: "Has L. already gone?—His leaving has again reminded me much of America, and if everything goes wrong, this may probably be the best."<sup>25</sup> In his essay on "Freiligrath in America"<sup>26</sup> M. D. Learned discusses the poet's various relations to America. He speaks of Freiligrath's friendship with Longfellow, who met the German poet in 1842 at St. Goar on the Rhine. Furthermore, he mentions that in 1844 tempting inducements were held out to Freiligrath to join the German colony then settling in Texas. Again, we hear of the poet's final decision, expressed in a letter to his mother from Brussels, November 18, 1844, that he would go to France, England, and America, but only for a visit, not to take up his permanent residence in one of these countries.

When he was still in Amsterdam, Freiligrath began to feel the influence of a new age on his poetic genius. His ideas and his diction became more realistic. In the poem "Audubon" (1833) he praises the noted American ornithologist, who wandered through forests and savannas to study scientifically the wonderful scenery of his country.<sup>27</sup> He points to America's might and greatness:

<sup>25</sup> W. Buchner, *Ferd. Freiligrath, ein Dichterleben in Briefen*, I, 123.

<sup>26</sup> *Americana Germanica*, 1897, pp. 54 ff.

<sup>27</sup> The Germans became acquainted with Audubon, the author of *Birds in America* (1829), through various chapters of his works, translated and published in German periodicals. In the *Ausland* appeared the following from the pen of the American ornithologist: in 1832, "Der Ohio sonst und jetzt," p. 292; "Die Schützen von Kentucky," p. 892; in 1840, "Die Holzschläger von Florida," p. 41; in 1841, "Die Squatters," p. 305.

. . . . Sieh da: du reiche,  
 Waldige Columbia,  
 Liegst du nicht gleich einer Eiche  
 Auf dem Planiglobe da?<sup>23</sup>

He describes the Indian as a free man, because he is still untouched by European civilization. It is with keen regret that he sees the approach of this culture, and he fears that it will destroy forever the beauties of primitive nature in America. What the Indians have to expect from the Europeans, the poet expresses in these lines:

Nieder brennt er eure wilden  
 Wälder, nimmt von euch Tribut,  
 Spült von euren Lederschilden  
 Der erschlag'nen Feinde Blut.

Saust einher auf Eisenbahnen,  
 Wo getobt der Roten Kampf.  
 Bunt von Wimpeln und von Fahnen  
 Teilt sein Schiff den Strom durch Dampf.

Kahl und nüchtern jede Stätte!  
 Wo Manittos hehrer Rauch  
 Durch des Urwalds Dickicht wehte,  
 Zieht der Hammerwerke Rauch.

Then the poet calls upon the Indians to resist this hostile and cruel invasion:

Bietet Trotz, ihr Tätowierten,  
 Eurer Feindin, der Kultur!  
 Knüpft die Stirnhaut von skalpierten  
 Weissen an des Gürtels Schnur.

He recognizes, however, with bitterness that finally the aborigines will have to yield to European culture:

<sup>23</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, I, 112 ff.

Weh, zu spät! Was hilft euch Säbel,  
Tomahawk und Lanzenschaft?  
Alles glatt und fashionable,  
Doch wo—Tiefe, Frische, Kraft?

Freiligrath's conception of the American Indian and his views regarding the disastrous results which the spread of European culture would bring to the peace of the primeval forest did not meet with general approbation in America. This is shown by a poem, published in 1844, by a Philadelphian, Dr. Angmarset, as a reply to Freiligrath's "Audubon." In this poem an Indian defies the "great German poet" and exclaims:

Ich, vom Volk der Tschirokiesen,  
Der ich erst das Deutsche lern',  
Werf' den Handschuh dir zu Füßen:  
Nimm ihn auf, o Deutschlands Stern!

He reminds him of the bloody wars of the Indians among themselves:

Weisst du, wie sich 'Indier' hassen?  
Wie auf blut'ger Wechselbank  
Sie nur Skalp auf Skalp erlassen,  
Währt es auch Äonen lang?

Angmarset's Indian knows only too well that his people are a race doomed to extinction:

Wir sind dem Gericht verfallen;  
Heimatlos entweichen wir;  
Unsres Herbstes Blätter fallen,  
Und kein Frühling folgt uns hier.

Finally, he points to the undisputed benefits resulting from an advance of culture in America:

Da, wo Klapperschlangen lagen,  
Schreibt der Kompass Wege vor;



Wo ich selbst noch Bär erschlagen,  
Hebt sich hoch ein Himmelsrohr.<sup>29</sup>

In 1835, Freiligrath wrote the last poem of an unfinished cycle, entitled *Der ausgewanderte Dichter* (published 1838). Schwering, an editor of the works of our poet, notes that doubtless Lenau's American journey inspired the Westphalian bard in depicting the "emigrated poet."<sup>30</sup> In this cycle, even more than in the other poems mentioned, a tone of lyric realism prevails. With a few brilliant strokes the poet brings before us the emigrant settled in the loneliness of the primeval forest beside the Missouri, where he builds his blockhouse:

Kunstlos und rauh;—vom Felsen reiss' ich Farren  
Und ander Kraut, dass ich die Fugen stopfe;  
Die moos'ge Rinde lass' ich an den Sparren,  
Dumpf durch die Schlucht dröhnt meiner Axt Geklopfe.

Die Fische springen und die Vögel schlagen.  
Die Knospen bersten und die Kräuter schiessen;  
Die Wipfel all, auf denen Tauben klagen,  
Streu'n ihre Blüten flüsternd mir zu Füßen.

But in the very heart of the vast forest the sweet songs of his native country awaken in the exiled German a profound feeling of loneliness and yearning. "Ist das der Wildnis Segen?" he asks, and confesses:

Ein einzig Jahr hat meinen Stolz gebrochen.

Heart-broken he finally turns to the Indians, to spend the rest of his life with them. There he dies, honored and loved by his friends, the aborigines, who reverently bless the memory of the strange white man:

<sup>29</sup> *Americana Germanica*, I (1897), pp. 61 ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, VI, 132.

In Frieden ruh' er, den wir nicht mehr sehen!  
 Lasst eine Hütt' auf seinem Grab uns bauen.  
 Sein Haupt lieg' westwärts, denn sein letztes Flehen  
 War: 'Krieger, o nach Morgen lasst mich schauen'.<sup>31</sup>

In another poem, "Die Schiffe" (1838), Freiligrath refers to the famous conflagration in New York on the 16th of December, 1835, which destroyed a part of the city, including the residences of many wealthy merchants. An American ship in the harbor of Amsterdam is represented as recalling this frightful scene:

Denn als ich jüngst von deinem Hafen schied,  
 O Stadt New York, da standest du in Flammen;  
 Von Funken ward die schwarze Nacht durchsprüht,  
 Ein Glutmeer war's, in dem wir Schiffe schwammen.<sup>32</sup>

In the poem "Die Steppe" (1838) the American prairie is picturesquely sketched:

Sie dehnt sich aus von Meer zu Meere,  
 Wer sie durchschritten hat, den graust, etc.<sup>33</sup>

In 1850, when the California gold-fever was the general topic of conversation in both the Western and the Eastern Hemisphere, Fr. Kapp published in a New York newspaper a poem by Freiligrath, "Californien," which strikingly reflects the greed of the gold-diggers:

<sup>31</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, I, 133.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>33</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, I, 115.—In his university years, Rudolf Gottschall, the noted historian of German literature, extolled the exotic muse of Freiligrath. In a poem, "Freiligrath" (1842), he says of it:

"Sie hat des Urwalds Majestät besungen,  
 Sein greises Haupt, umkränzt von den Lianen,  
 Aus dess' geheimnisvollen Dämmerungen  
 Der Freiheit Tag erhob die gold'nen Fahnen!  
 Ihr Blitz, Amerika, den du getragen,  
 Hat Grossbritannien in den Staub zerschlagen."

R. Gottschall, *Lieder der Gegenwart*, p. 105.

Staub und Körner, und Körner und Staub!  
 Der Urwald schüttelt sein ewiges Laub,  
 Die Sonne blitzt—sie sind blind und taub,  
 Ihr einzig Sinnen der blitzende Raub—  
 So seh' ich sie schürfen und scharren!<sup>34</sup>

Freiligrath's vivid presentation of nature and life in America was strongly influenced by a number of earlier and contemporary writers from both sides of the Atlantic, including Cooper, Irving, Audubon, Chateaubriand, Chamisso, and Lenau. In an essay, "Les sources de Freiligrath,"<sup>35</sup> Victor Fleury has sought to trace these influences. In the course of his discussion he says: "L'Amérique de Chateaubriand lui est aussi familière: ses savannes, ses flamants écarlate, ses lacs du Canada, ses Indiens avec leur manitou, rappellent ceux du Natchez et des Voyages en Amérique." With Chamisso, who first introduced Freiligrath's work to the public, the Westphalian poet was on terms of friendship, as is shown by their intimate correspondence. In a letter dated Amsterdam, May 18, 1836, Freiligrath wrote to the older poet: "I am now busy sketching a number of pictures inscribed 'Traveling Poets,' wherein I intend to accompany Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Campbell (in Algeria), Washington Irving (on the prairies), with tiercets through the wilderness. May I be allowed to dedicate a chapter also to you and to picture, though with imperfect strokes, the poet-circumnavigator of the globe, as I imagine him beside a cannon on the 'Rurik' or on an island of the South Sea?"<sup>36</sup> It is to be regretted that the poet did not carry out his plan. We also learn with what great interest Chamisso read such poems of his young friend as *Der ausgewanderte Dichter*.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Freiligraths Werke*, II, 155.

<sup>35</sup> *Revue Germanique*, May 1922, p. 103 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Buchner, *Ferd. Freiligrath, ein Dichterleben* etc., pp. 145-146.

<sup>37</sup> Buchner, p. 191.

Although in his sympathy with the Indians Freiligrath is influenced by the traditional romantic conception, his presentation of life in the Urwald is predominantly realistic. In clearness of expression and brilliancy of coloring, his poetic description compares very favorably with the splendid pictures of America which we admired in the *Schutt*-poems of Anastasius Grün.

Freiligrath's attitude toward America, while one of deep sympathy with the sufferings of the emigrant and the Indian, is certainly without hostility toward our nation and people. In striking contrast is the passion and virulence with which Wolfgang Menzel proclaims his antipathy to America. The Swabian poet, critic, and literary historian was, as is well known, an enthusiastic member of the Burschenschaft in his youth and, afterwards, a strong opponent of the reactionary government in the Württemberg parliament. In 1848, he transferred his allegiance from the Liberal to the Conservative party. Even as early as 1834, in a work of literary history, *Geist der Geschichte*, Menzel, while criticizing the writers of Young Germany, cannot refrain from inveighing against the United States. He says: "The savage can be civilized, and a wrathful person appeased, but the baseness of cultured people is ineradicable. Their falseness peers forth from all phases of public and private life, and most imprudently where emancipation has gone furthest, in the political culture of America as in the classical education in Germany."<sup>38</sup> Menzel considers the Yankee the impersonation of rudeness and arrogance. In his *Denkwürdigkeiten* (1867), published by his son in 1876, he refers to the eventful life of his friend Franz Gräter, who in the forties emigrated to America. As Gräter was a skilful designer, he obtained a profitable position in the service of the American government, but soon got into such financial dif-

<sup>38</sup> Menzel, *op. cit.*, p. 475.



ficulties that Menzel had to send him the fare for his return to Swabia, "since the Yankees are more merciless than the Germans."<sup>39</sup> Of similar nature is a phrase in Menzel's characterization of Francis Grund, a German-American writer in the thirties and later an American diplomatist, when he speaks of Grund's "etwas yankeemässige Ausschreitung."<sup>40</sup> Menzel's invectives against America invited the severest criticism on the part of the writers of Young Germany, who as cosmopolitans were much more unprejudiced in their judgment of this country.

In reviewing the presentation of America by the German writers of the romantic-realistic transition period, we notice the great progress that has been made toward a better understanding and clearer delineation of the characteristic conditions which existed in the United States during and before their time. Doubtless the reports of German immigrants and the descriptions of German travelers contributed largely to this marked progress in a definite knowledge of affairs in this country. Indeed, the time had passed when the Western Republic appeared in German literature as a product of poetic fancy and subjective literary fabrication, as a happy refuge for political dreamers and weary "Weltschmerzler." We see how in the thirties the fantastic idealism of writers like Zschokke yields to the sense of realism of poets like Freiligrath and to the informed criticism of novelists like Biernatzki. The historical past of the Republic is presented in interesting and well-oriented sketches. In the prose and poetry of that period, we find fascinating descriptions of the life of the settlers in the Urwald, but, in sharp contrast with the nebulous conception of the Romanticists, these descriptions are clear, distinct, realistic, and even the sentimental picture of the Indian no longer re-

<sup>39</sup> Menzel, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

mains unchallenged. Although still somewhat affected by romantic ideas the writers of this new epoch seek to enlighten the German public on the actual conditions prevailing across the Atlantic. In eloquent language and with a sympathetic understanding they point to the various advantages which life in the American democracy and amid primitive American nature presents to the mind and body of the German immigrant; but they do not forget to mention that this life has also its dark sides, and that its advantages are only gained by toil and privations. How this sense of realism manifested itself from other angles in the presentation of America by two further groups of German writers, we shall see in the two remaining chapters, when we discuss German emigration literature and the writings of Young Germany.

[While this dissertation was in press, the author discovered a German romantic-realistic historical novel in which the hero, a former Prussian officer, gives an interesting account of the military operations of the German mercenaries in the Revolutionary War, particularly around Charleston, N. C., and Yorktown, Va. The title of the novel is: *Rückblicke auf ein buntes Leben, oder Scenen aus den Kämpfen der Engländer in Nordamerika und Ostindien*. Romantisches Gemälde von Eduard Heine. 2 Bde. Neuhaldensleben, 1834.]

## CHAPTER VII

### EMIGRATION LITERATURE

One of the most important factors that contributed to a more realistic presentation of conditions in America in German literature was the rapid growth of emigration to the New World. This emigration from Germany, already in progress from the end of the seventeenth century, increased enormously throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. "As early as 1816 the Dutch harbors were filled with German emigrants," says G. v. Bosse<sup>1</sup>; "in the spring of 1817 in Swabia and the Rhineland a real migration of nations took place." Most of these emigrants left their native country for economic reasons; but not a small percentage, especially after the crucial years 1830 and 1848, crossed the Atlantic to escape political persecution. Up to 1830 German emigrants were for the most part peasants and artisans; after that date many Germans of culture and intellect settled in the United States. After a few years of residence in this country, a number of these settlers recorded the experiences which they had in the New World, in order to give advice and information to other people in the Fatherland who wished to emigrate to America. Thus, beginning at the end of the second decade, a multitude of handbooks and guidebooks appeared which presented life in the United States as it showed itself to

<sup>1</sup> G. v. Bosse, *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten*.—According to Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, German emigration by decades, taken from the census reports, was as follows:

1821-30:	6,761
1831-40:	152,454
1841-50:	434,626

the minds of German immigrants. Such a movement could not fail to affect the poets and novelists of Germany, and ere many years of the century had passed, we find the emigrant and his fortunes clearly reflected in German imaginative literature. One of the first writers who treated this subject was Adolf von Schaden, a dramatist and novelist (1791-1840). He published, in 1819, two works, entitled *Die deutschen Emigranten* and *Die europäischen Auswanderer*.<sup>2</sup> Goethe also, as we have seen, was interested in German emigration to America from a literary standpoint. In *Stoff und Gehalt*<sup>3</sup> he expressed the hope that this movement might furnish new and attractive subject matter to the bloodless German novel and epic through some writer who would draw a comprehensive picture of the political history and colonization of the United States, as the background for a story in which German emigrants, led by a Protestant clergyman, should cross the Atlantic and settle in the New World. We have pointed out, furthermore, that Eichen-dorff, Rückert, Freiligrath, and Gerstäcker treated the subject of emigration in prose and poetry. In Gerstäcker's novel *Der deutschen Auswanderer Fahrt und Schicksal* (1847) we see a group of German emigrants under the leadership of Pastor Hehrmann embark in Bremen on the brig *Hoffnung* and arrive in New York, whence they turn to the Middle West in search of farm land, but, after many "Kreuz- und Querzüge," scatter in all directions. Aside from these writers, already mentioned in other connections, several other authors, representative of romantic-realistic literature—Otto Ludwig, Leopold Schefer, Ernst Willkomm, Berthold Auerbach, and Hoffmann von Fallersleben—are particularly noteworthy as reflecting in their works the lights and shadows of contemporary German emigration to America.

<sup>2</sup> All endeavors which have been made to obtain a copy of these works have proved unsuccessful.

<sup>3</sup> *Goethes Werke*, W. A., XLI, 2, p. 296.



Otto Ludwig saw, in 1834, in his native town, Eisfeld in Saxony, a group of emigrants set out for America, among them a number of his own relatives and acquaintances. One of his earliest poems is "Lied der Auswanderer" (1834). Here the poet has succeeded in giving vivid expression to the grief of his departing friends as well as to the strong trust in God which inspired them on their way to the New World:

Geht's über's Meer, da fühlt man erst,  
Wie fest die Heimat hält,  
Da greift es hin durch Mark und Bein—  
Die Hände her,—lasst's Weinen sein,  
Es geht nicht aus der Welt.

Seid ohne Sorgen, kehrt euch nicht  
An Ängsten und an Spott.  
Auch über'm fernen Berg und Tal  
Ist blauer Himmel allzumal,  
Und über'm Himmel Gott.

"This song," says Adolf Stern, the editor of Ludwig's works, "shows the deep impression which that scene of emigration made upon the young man. It would not have been surprising if the thought had entered his mind that he too must seek new fields for his literary tendencies and his unusual development of character on the other side, although he felt that he had ineradicable roots in the life of his native country. Fortunately, he also saw in these ideas in later years only passing dreams which sometimes made him believe that he could found a new theater among the people in the New World; for Ludwig did not possess any of the qualities that were of value in America or would have guaranteed him success."<sup>4</sup> The fact remains, however, that the thought of America frequently occupied the novelist's mind. In 1834, a brother-in-law of Ludwig's

<sup>4</sup> Otto Ludwig, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 65 ff.

uncle, Christian Otto, a shoemaker in Eisfeld, emigrated to the New World. When, after a few years, he returned to his native town, he may well have brought home a fantastic account of his adventures in the Urwald. In 1841, the topic of emigration to America appeared in the *Limbacher Novelle*, where we meet German emigrants and hear their parting song. Again, in 1843, when Christian Otto died, his widow, who had made his life miserable, and his son Adolf left their home-land and, with other relatives, set out for America. In the novel *Maria* (1843), the main character Eisner, a painter, thinking himself guilty of the death of a young woman in a Saxon village, flees to the New World to drown the voice of his conscience in the turbulent life across the sea. After three years, he returns to Saxony where he again meets and then marries the young woman, who had only apparently been dead. Furthermore, in the drama *Die Rechte des Herzens* (1845) the poet alludes to America. A Polish refugee, Paul Lublinski, living in a village on the Rhine, receives a letter from his friend Leo, who, after the defeat of Poland, had gone to America into exile. From there he writes to Paul that he has bought land in the Western World, where he has laid out a park with a pavilion, resembling the estate of his father in Poland, and that he only wishes that his friend would follow him across the sea. The fulfilment of this wish, however, is made impossible through the early death of the Polish nobleman in Germany. In consideration of these various references to America in the works of Ludwig, it is the more regrettable that the latter refrained from picturing conditions in this country and from stating his own views on life in the New World.

The principal representatives of the German emigration novel in the first half of the nineteenth century are Schefer, Willkomm, and Auerbach.

Leopold Schefer, a lyric poet and novelist, the author of the *Laienbrevier*, a volume of charming poems, a book of meditation

for the layman, was, according to the enthusiastic editor of his works, W. v. Lüdemann, "one of the most peculiar spirits and one of the most gifted leaders of German universal culture."<sup>5</sup> Quite different was the judgment of Wolfgang Menzel, who said of Schefer's works in his customary hammer-and-tongs style: "These books make the impression as if the devil would become a clergyman."<sup>6</sup> Like the Romanticists, Schefer had a special liking for foreign lands, and frequently pictures them in his novels. Influenced by the works of Washington Irving and especially by Cooper's *Pioneers*, he described in glowing colors the charm and grandeur of the gigantic aspects of nature in America. The scene of the *Waldbrand* (1827) is laid in Lower Canada. From there, in 1826, a German immigrant is supposed to write his impressions and experiences in the new country to a friend in Lüneburg. He depicts the American spring in all its romantic splendor: "Spring was beautiful. The peaches blossomed rosy around our house, and the apple-trees as gloriously as if decorated with rubies in the orchard. Our bees gathered their harvest until far into the night. They did not have to fly far to the blossoming pines, which like a green wall high as a palace surrounded the hedged-in field. We lived in a wretched natural park, covered by one immensely high, unbroken forest-roof. And when I stood at the edge of the forest mantle and grasped a branch, the last branch of the last tree on the other side dipped into the Pacific."<sup>7</sup> Particularly striking is the description of the forest-fire: "Now there was a crackling over the ground not far from us; there was a cracking, a thousand-fold rattling, and where the flamelets flickered along, weary

<sup>5</sup> *Schefers Werke*, XI, p. vii.—L. Schefer (1784-1862), born in Muskau in Silesia, studied, as an autodidact, philosophy, mathematics, and the classical and oriental languages. In 1813, he became general-manager of Count Pückler's estates, and, from 1816 to 1820, visited Austria, Italy, England, and Asia Minor.

<sup>6</sup> Menzel, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, p. 300.

<sup>7</sup> *Schefers Werke*, II, 1 ff.

wood-cocks and collar-pheasants and other birds flew up, like phoenixes reborn out of the flames. Here and there a wild ox moved about with hollow bellowing, or a company of cranes deprived of water. The burning off of the grass and the bushes was followed by sparks and smoke, the smoke by clouds of ashes which rose and rose again; glowing coals flew up; the powerful flames crackled and roared in an unheard-of manner. I was devoid of feeling. Here only One could save."<sup>8</sup>

The first real German emigration novel is Schefer's *Die Probefahrt nach Amerika* (1836), a forerunner of Kürnberger's *Der Amerikamüde* (1856). Schefer's novel is a caustic satire on German emigration to the New World and on German enthusiasm for America in the thirties. A careless style and a fantastic realism that prevail in the novel, deprive the latter of all literary value and make it a German chap-book, hardly ever mentioned by literary critics. The novel contains, however, much material that is valuable for the historian of the culture of that time. The main character of the story is a Silesian clergyman, Volkmar, who leads a large number of German emigrants from Eastern Germany across the sea. The whole work is a personal narrative by Volkmar of his experiences shortly before and during his emigration to America. At first we hear of the economic conditions which drove the discontented people from their homes and of the preparations

<sup>8</sup> *Schefers Werke*, II, 49.—"Jetzt knisterte es nicht weit von uns am Boden dahin; es knackerte, prasselte tausendfach, und wo Flämmchen hinflackerten, stieben nun erst müde Schnepfen und Kragenfasanen und anderes Geflügel auf, wie Phönixe neu aus den Flammen belebt. Hin und her ein wilder Ochse mit dumpfem Gebrüll, oder eine Gesellschaft wasserberaubter Kraniche. Dem Abbrennen des Grases und des Gebüsches folgten Funken und Qualm, dem Qualm Aschenwolken, die aufstiegen und niederfielen und wieder aufstiegen; glühende Kohlen flogen empor; die wuchtenden Flammen dobberten und sausten, nur mit sich selbst zu vergleichen. Ich war fühllos. Hier konnte niemand retten als Einer."



for the journey. Then we accompany the party to Bremen, where already many other emigrants, including all classes of society, were waiting for the departure of the ship. We learn that an American broker, Erwin, a somewhat suspicious character, who came to Germany to stimulate emigration to the New World, lured the clergyman and his friends to the other side by pointing out: "'Bread and Liberty' is written for our guests with sweat and tears over the gate to our country; we have no debts, no enemies, no poor people."<sup>9</sup> "Over there only lazy people starve, not industrious people, and industry is the virtue of all free Americans."<sup>10</sup> When Volkmar with his party arrives in "Mobile Bay und dem Meerteich vor dem Hafen von New Orleans," he at once becomes so fascinated by the exotic splendor of nature in the New World that in his delight he imagines he sees the inscription written in golden letters over the gate of entrance into the land: "Peace! Bread! Liberty!" Quite different, however, was the sight that presented itself to him when he entered the city. The yellow fever was raging among the inhabitants. He met numerous slaves with only one arm; the other one had been cut off by their masters, against whom they had revolted. Again, he witnessed a conflagration, caused by negroes, and a new outbreak of a revolt of the black population. In addition, his own wife, who had followed him to Bremen, but had arrived in New Orleans earlier than he, succumbed to the insidious fever. He calls the Mississippi the "Totenstrom." His judgment of the character of the Americans is as follows: "In the face of the Americans lies something inexplicable. Not melancholy, not discouragement, not shyness, not embarrassment, but the calmness of a great future and a modest and yet yearning desire for it, and an almost child-like bashfulness and an anxiety like that of a bridegroom rests

<sup>9</sup> Schefer, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

upon their faces. They appear to me as if they themselves should emigrate—into distant, unknown, beautiful days. From thence comes that secret restlessness, that peculiar subdued look, an almost comical seriousness, and a serene sorrow.”<sup>11</sup> Then he describes the impression which the young cities of the country made upon him: “They have been founded on a large scale, inspired by an unlimited hope, but they are still in their youth.” When he visited the first American school, he was impressed by the variety of practical subjects which the children were taught. He ridicules, however, the administration of justice in America, and also the custom of keeping one’s hat on in the room, even in the presence of ladies. In the course of the story Volkmar relates what he saw on his journey up the Mississippi, from Louisiana to Mount Vernon in Kentucky. Here he was delighted in seeing “the first American money, silver and gold, and also American newspapers, flying like miraculous pigeons over the country.” When the traveler came to Clarkesville in Indiana, he found there wax works, presenting the figures of all European potentates, and all kinds of European farces, exhibited in a large hall, called by him “Little Europe.” Volkmar’s account of religious life in America reminds us of the views expressed in descriptions of German travelers in America. “Here the people themselves buried their dead; they married young couples, they even baptized, and the pope and his clergy would here, too, fall into a swoon. Indeed, we were invited even to a christening in Silverheelstown, where a father had a special believer in each child. The oldest son was a Jew, the following a Turk, the third one a Quaker; the oldest daughter a Catholic, and so on, in order that at least one of his children should catch the right creed.”<sup>12</sup> Concerning American servants the German clergyman notes that

<sup>11</sup> Schefer, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>12</sup> Schefer, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

the treatment of them and their conduct is very much like that of impoverished European noblemen and noble ladies who are in the service of middle-class families. In Philadelphia the hero of our novel has a chance to be introduced to the President of the United States, who asks the German what he had seen in America. The traveler answers: "No lèse-majesté, no hungry or lazy people, no soldier, no nobleman, no anarchist, no beggar, no cripple, no bailiff, no so-called advocate, no theologian, not even a pope." When the President asks for further information, Volkmar supplements his answer by saying: "No art, no culture, no religion."<sup>13</sup> At the end of his journey, when he was grievously afflicted and bitterly disappointed by all that he had seen and heard in the country, Volkmar gives up his plan of settling in America. He returns to Germany. After his arrival in his native town, he sums up his views on German emigration to the New World in the following words: "Even one prodigal son rends the heart of the mother so that she cannot die.—And you, you thousand sons of the Fatherland! How could it even die without you! Oh, there is a Fatherland! Well, then, be its sons!"<sup>14</sup> Evidently the author of our novel has drawn his information about conditions in America chiefly from descriptive literature of German travelers who presented these conditions in an unfavorable light. Moreover, the obvious caricatures of American life which fill the pages of our story plainly show that the writer has given too much play to his fancy. In view of these facts, it is the more astonishing that a contemporary critic in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* says of Schefer's emigration novel, "The magic fragrance of poetry is diffused through this production."<sup>15</sup>

One of the most interesting and most characteristic works in German literature on America in the period under discussion

<sup>13</sup> Schefer, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>15</sup> *Allgem. Literaturzeitung*, 1836, No. 14.

is Willkomm's *Die Europamüden* (1838). Ernst Adolf Willkomm (1810-1886), noted as a dramatic poet and a novelist, was particularly successful in picturing the customs, the social conditions, and the intellectual tendencies of his time. He, too, was a writer of the transition period from the romantic to the realistic literature. There are in his works undeniable traces of Romanticism, beside characterizations of realistic accuracy. Moreover, the pessimistic views of his contemporaries, the writers of Young Germany, reveal themselves almost on every page. These complex literary features give the *Europamüden* its peculiar character. Taken as a whole, the novel is a fantastic, pretentious, and confused work. It is a "modernes Lebensbild," and presents, as the author declares in an epilogue, "a picture of great sorrows of life." But out of a gloomy pessimism, reflecting the desolate conditions of Europe in the third decade of the nineteenth century, hope shines forth that from America healing will come to the ills of the Old World. The action of the novel takes place in Cologne in the Rhineland. The characters are for the most part caricatures of German types, representing various classes of society, such as the clergyman, the scholar, the merchant, the monk, the Jew. They show in their intercourse, by word and deed, how much they have been affected and depressed by the *Überkultur* of their time, and they confidently believe in America as the source of a new and better future for Europe. As the *Europamüden* is little known in America, a more detailed discussion of the novel may not be out of place.

What Willkomm means by "Europamüden" is clearly expressed in the following words: "Politics, religion, social life, this great trinity out of which all public welfare arises, have reached an effete stage in Europe, and he who recognizes this, grows weary of these unnatural conditions."<sup>16</sup> "Would not," says Sigismund, the main character of the novel, "the dark

<sup>16</sup> Willkomm, *op. cit.*, I, 167.



son in America's primeval forests foam at the mouth with a malignant arraignment of the degeneracy of our ideas, if he should see nature in its sacred beauty crushed under the elegant burden of convention, culture, artificial civilization?"<sup>17</sup> To America with her originality and youthful freshness the weary figures of our story turn their eyes; thither they intend to emigrate; from there they expect a beneficial, invigorating influence upon the morbid conditions of Europe.

Let us now consider the characteristic features of America as reflected in the views of the characters of our novel. The traditional conception of America as a land of Unkultur appears in the answer given by the wife of Bardeloh, a German scholar, to the question of her little son Felix: "Mother, are there in America also such great and old cities as Cologne?" To this the mother replies: "There are not; over there everything is young, new and fresh; but man has no heart. He does not feel either sorrow or joy, he has neither poetry nor art, but only steamboats, ocean liners, forests, and, besides, much, very much money."<sup>18</sup> In the main, however, the principal features in the picture of the New World have the same grandiose and unreal character as those which we found in the Romanticists; indeed, they often appear in such a fantastic and almost ethereal splendor that we sometimes ask ourselves, whether after all the intent of the author is not to ridicule the Romantic conception of America. We are reminded of Zschokke's idealism when we listen to Sigismund's truly poetical words: "Over there across the waves of the Atlantic the land of promise lies imbedded in the sacred shade of the primeval forest which

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*—"Würde nicht der dunkle Sohn in Amerikas Urwäldern den Giftschaum seiner Rede aussprudeln über die Entartung unserer Sinnesweise, sähe er die Natur in ihrer heiligen Schöne zusammenbrechen unter der zierlichen Last der Convenienz, der Bildung, der unechten Civilisation?"

<sup>18</sup> Willkomm, *op. cit.*, I, 264.

embraces and caresses it with alluring hope, like a mother her smiling, vigorous child. Thither nature fled when it was driven out of Europe. It mirrors itself in the transparent flood of the Ohio, guiltless, because it is strong, and godly, because it is free. But above it the eye of God quivers, and tears of joy roll like worlds along over it, and America's sons look up to the great temple vaulted for them by the free God for universal worship. And they pray working and work praying, and there is no misery among them, because no work presses upon them. They are glad, happy, pious, religious, because liberty has pinned the badge of humanity in twenty-six stars upon their breast."<sup>19</sup> In another passage, Gleichmuth, a clergyman, points to America as the cure for Europe's defects. He says: "Only a fresh, youthful nature, brought from America's forests, as we have obtained from over there the motive power of steam,—only such a nature can redeem Europe and call into divine life her weakened and broken generation, a generation that is noble even in its agony. It is true, America too has her sins and vices, but these are sins engendered by vigor and wantonness, sins which produce new values and conquer, because they are qualified for transformation into virtues, whereas the sins of Europe, resulting from weakness, lead only to destruction." When Sigismund announces his determination to emigrate to America, he looks, like a prophet, over towards the Promised Land and exclaims in a kind of fantastic ecstasy: "I am going to transplant Europe's poetic love into America's poetic primitive world. There a race shall arise with German blood, German perseverance, German soul (*Gemüt*), and German power of faith (*Glaubenskräftigkeit*) which has drawn its life from the inexhaustible fountain of liberty. Behind me I see the beacons of the coast already sinking; the night casts its dark shades over the sea, but morning lights the welcom-

<sup>19</sup> Willkomm, I, 353 f.

ing beacons on a new coast. The Appalachians flash up in the morning-sun like gigantic helmets, the cypresses at the Mississippi strive upwards towards the sky and carry up the proud question whether it might be permissible to be divinely free on earth beside God."<sup>20</sup> While in America, Sigismund would work for Europe and especially for Germany, "the holy sepulchre of the modern world," in the belief that from there healing medicine must be offered to afflicted Europe. In the New World, he thinks, nature still dwells, rules, and works with its whole, unimpaired, and holy energy.

In the character of Burton, Willkomm introduces an American into the novel. This American is described in the following words: "The man was muscularly built and tall; his hair between blond and brown. His clothing was fine, but not at all after European fashion. Besides, the good breeding of a gentleman did not seem to be foreign to him. His face reflected a cheerfulness, such as I had never seen before. Not that he showed that fickle joviality, usually displayed by a sanguine person of our stamp; his open features betrayed rather energy and consciousness of manly strength. His face was of a dark brown color, but it was handsome; his high forehead was encircled by a few light wrinkles; his mouth expressed firmness; his eyes looked around unrestrained and thoughtful. No malice furtively stole forth from the bottom of his soul."<sup>21</sup> What attracted Sigismund most in the character of this American was his unaffectedness, his manly, cheerful look, the uprightness in his whole appearance. The German with all his "sublime culture" felt wretchedly small in comparison with this honest, noble American. Every word of the latter revealed a sane, bright mind that had grown strong and great in the struggle with gigantic powers of nature. Affected friendliness

<sup>20</sup> Willkomm, I, 356.

<sup>21</sup> Willkomm, II, 76.

was foreign to him and despised. In his opinion, art was entirely stupid rubbish. "That is a mighty effeminating business," he said, "this dabbling in art. There is nothing to be gained by it; it makes neither citizens nor men; it makes only idealistic chatterers."<sup>22</sup> Sigismund saw in Burton's vigorous, healthy disposition that unshakable virtue of a true republican, i.e. of a man who is free in political, social, and religious respects, and he thought that only such men were known in America.

Burton had come from Cincinnati on the Ohio. "The Rhine," he said, "is a mighty, beautiful river, but cannot be compared with the Ohio."<sup>23</sup> He had been in Europe for two years. Commercial connections had recently brought him to Germany, a nation which attracted him more than all the others in Europe. Intercourse with German settlers in America, whose deep feeling and untiring perseverance he had learned to appreciate, had wakened in him the desire to become acquainted with their native country, "so great in its sufferings." However, the energy of those German-Americans whom he had admired, he did not find in their Fatherland, but rather "a good-natured stiltedness, an outgrowth of a false position in relation to the world's history."<sup>24</sup> This independent, indigenous son of America could not comprehend that a certain conventionalism should be necessary in order that one might drag one's way wearily through life. Everywhere he missed the spirit of determination and the energy of action. "You are mighty great in words and mighty small in transforming words into deeds," he used to say.<sup>25</sup> "People in your country are mighty smart, but, at bottom, have little wisdom. You are altogether too learned. You have a great history, but little worldly wisdom."<sup>26</sup> America

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Willkomm, II, 79.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> Willkomm, II, 85.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.



is for him the ideal land of political liberty. "Europe also has her mighty sweet charms, but America's liberty outshines them all, and as to the flag with its twenty-six stars—is it not just as beautiful to behold as the compassion of heaven which it lets flow down in promising splendor over fatigued, weary Europe?"<sup>27</sup> When Sigismund informs him of his intention to emigrate to America, Burton urges the German to depart: "Get ready, for we must now start, as soon as possible. Here I break down, since all the powers of my character are checked. It is obvious that you people have not the will to become happy. How then, in all the world, can you live and work! Nothing astonishes me more than the tenacity by which you are able at times to find a substitute for the cheerful working of free nature. Such ways I do not like; thereby you too will become feeble and dishonest."<sup>28</sup> Particularly interesting is Burton's presentation of his own native country. He declares: "Europeans frequently deceive themselves when they enter our happy country. Liberty in its most beautiful adornment of youthful innocence does not dwell on our coasts." Along the Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Connecticut, vices often are to be seen which have grown on the soil of Europe. The true abode of liberty is found in the quiet, unviolated regions of the interior of America. Thither the European must go when he seeks a cure for his breaking heart. Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois are such regions, where a happy life can be found. But one has to work and must leave behind all dreams. We have use only for industrious people who morally revive, because they remain vigorous and natural. Burton thinks that some day, perhaps after one hundred years, American family-life too would cultivate more peaceful arts. Even for a mad and eccentric monk like the one presented in our novel,

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>28</sup> Willkomm, II, 169.

the sea-breeze and the mystery of America's magnificent scenery would prove beneficial.

In Düsseldorf, Burton and his party meet a large number of German emigrants on their way to America, for the most part poor people, partly already well along in years, depressed by grief and affliction. Only a few could pay for their passage. The boat on which they wanted to embark in Rotterdam was not seaworthy. Furthermore, Burton complains of the wretched speculation by the ship-owners and of the carelessness of the authorities. In his opinion, there are thousands who perish miserably, as victims of hunger and the sea, either on the journey or as a result of it. He declares himself willing to take care of these people. "Es sind mächtig brave Menschen." "Such men America needs. Their descendants in future times will, on their part, help benefit Europe."<sup>29</sup> On Burton's request, the leader of the party, Tannenstädt, an old man of seventy years, is introduced to him; he was a native of Württemberg and was going to emigrate with his numerous family from Germany to escape a gloomy future. "Nevertheless, these good people," the American notes, "will have to suffer terribly in my native country. They are too much accustomed to bow in obedience. The ghost of traditional authority checks their steps, and the shadow of the broken yoke still presses upon their neck, so unaccustomed to liberty. They must get rid of that if they want to be respected by the Americans, as they are too much attached to their old customs." But this too will disappear, "denn wir Amerikaner sind mächtig derbe Menschen."<sup>30</sup>

Very sensible is Sigismund's view, expressed in his answer to complaints which frequently were made about the intellectual inferiority of the Americans. "It would be ridiculous," he says,

<sup>29</sup> Willkomm, II, 104.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

"to expect from young America that it should vie with Europe in art and the sciences. America became free without having lived through the bloody and abnormal experiences of a thousand years of world-history."<sup>31</sup>

At the conclusion of the novel, we see the small party of Europamüden, including a number of characters of the story, taking leave of the Old World on the brig "Hope" and starting on their sea voyage. From the banks of the Mississippi Sigismund will again write to his friends at home.

In an epilogue to his novel Willkomm reveals his intention of publishing some day a continuation of the story for his friends. It is to be regretted that this promised continuation did not appear. It would have been of interest to learn whether the hopes of the Europamüden were realized in America.

Willkomm's *Die Europamüden* occupies, indeed, a very important and prominent place in German literature on America. This is due to the fact that in this novel all the various features in the picture of America, as reflected in German prose and poetry from 1800 to 1850, are comprehensively presented. There we find the ideal conceptions of the earlier and later Romanticists as well as the fantastic dreams of Germany's academic youth and the soberer views of the writers of Young Germany. It must be said, however, that, in spite of the realistic style of the novel, the romantic ideas on America predominate. In contrast with the caricature of our country, as pictured in Schefer's novel, Willkomm's *Die Europamüden* presents America and the Americans in a bright and radiant light. In many respects, particularly in the praise of nature in America and of American liberty, the views expressed in Willkomm's novel remind us of Sealsfield's enthusiastic picture of the transatlantic continent. Willkomm is especially successful in portraying Burton as an American. As the author spent a part of his life in

<sup>31</sup> Willkomm, II, 82.

Hamburg, it is a fair supposition that his personal intercourse with Americans who came to Germany left a very favorable impression upon his mind.

When at the end of the forties the Californian gold-fever drew many adventurers from Europe to the Pacific coast of America, fantastic tales about the gold-diggers across the sea were circulated in Germany. A satire, entitled *Münchhausen in Californien*, ridiculing this gold-fever, was published, in 1849, by Abraham Krakenfuss, a German author quite unknown to literary history, who states that his story is a true, entirely authentic and nowhere exaggerated report on his expedition to the gold district of California. The writer calls himself "Captain of the Diddleus." Diddleus was the name of the ship on which he, as the manager of the "Grand Auriferus Stultiferus Asiniferus Californian Bamboozle Company in Hamburg," led a German expedition to the gold district of San Francisco. Lured by romantic descriptions of the Californian wonderland and by the hope of great profit, the emigrants embark on the Diddleus in Bremerhafen. Among the passengers we find a native of Berlin, an Englishman, two Irish agitators, two noted German socialists, a French quack, and two retired Saxon officers, "a cargo of rascals and blockheads." During the sea-voyage these choice spirits keep up a lively conversation and, finally, tar and feather two of their party, Schrepf and Vantel, by orders of the sea-god Neptune. Soon after their arrival in San Francisco they feel keenly disappointed. "The country did not look particularly inviting." The regions to which their road leads, consist of much sand, a good deal of rock, and only a few scanty bushes and low trees. Affected by suffering and privations, the emigrants finally reach and ascend the Goldberg. But after a few days of hard digging, they find themselves without any food. Then they meet an American trapper and make a contract with him, according to



which they themselves should work and deliver to the hunter the gold for which he would have to provide their livelihood. When the captain sees, however, that the expedition is going to be a failure, he leaves the party and returns to Bremen.

No other German writer of note in our period took such a keen interest in emigration to America as Berthold Auerbach. His native district, the Black Forest, was particularly affected, in the thirties and forties, by the great exodus to the New World, and it is therefore not surprising that the author of the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* in his earlier novels referred so frequently to this special subject. In his *Gedenkblatt* (1882) Eugen Zabel points to the custom of Auerbach's muse of casting furtive glances at America as the land of hope and promise. He says: "Through a large part of Auerbach's novels previously mentioned runs the longing for America as a conciliatory key-note in all the perilous situations of life. He who cannot reconcile himself any more to the conditions at home or wishes to forget what has passed, emigrates to America; especially loving couples who see their love-affairs threatened by their parents think of the New World; hardly in any novel of the author's is this prospect missing entirely, even though it reveals itself at times only slightly."<sup>32</sup>

In the novels *Der Tolpatsch* (1842) and *Ivo, der Harjle*, (1843) a German peasant, Aloys Schorer, called "Tolpatsch," from the Black Forest who emigrated to America, writes from Ohio to his mother: "It often weighs on my heart that I am to enjoy all the good things alone. Often I wish all Nordstetten might be here. Then you could see how the Tolpatsch now has his four horses in the stable and ten colts in the field. I did not know at all at home that the larks sing so beautifully. Just think of it, in this country there are none, and also no nightingales, but many other beautiful birds."<sup>33</sup> In public

<sup>32</sup> Eugen Zabel, *Berthold Auerbach, ein Gedenkblatt* etc., p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, pp. 40, 323 (Cotta ed.).

meetings in America, he finds a solemnity similar to that in a church, and yet different, "for here everybody speaks who can and may, here everybody is on terms of equality."<sup>34</sup> Tolpatsch is delighted with the New World:

Mother, it is such a splendid country, this America; one has to work, and quite hard, but then one also knows why the tithes and the taxes don't take off the cream. I am living here on my farm, here no emperor and no king has the right to command us to do anything, and the bailiff is entirely unknown here.<sup>35</sup>

In the novel *Des Schlossbauers Vefe* (1843) Bröner, having dishonored his sweetheart Vefe and having taken her money, leaves her and emigrates to America.<sup>36</sup>

In *Lucifer* (1847) Luzian, who had disturbed public worship and, therefore, was put in jail, later went to America because he had heard that this was the only country which upheld religious liberty.<sup>37</sup>

Many references to America are contained in the novels *Neues Leben* (1851), *Ein eigen Haus* (1853), and *Barfüßle* (1856), where emigrants relate their various experiences in the New World. In the latter novel the Krappenzacher says: "Columbus was a real savior. Think of all that he can save you from! Indeed, this America is the pig-trough of the Old World, therein is put what is no longer of any use in the kitchen: cabbage and turnips and all in a muddle, and for those who live in the 'castle' behind the house and understand French: oui, oui! it is still good food."<sup>38</sup>

In another novel, *Brosi und Moni* (1852), two aged people, husband and wife, seek comfort in the thought that their lost

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104 f.

<sup>37</sup> Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 180 f.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 115.

son Severin may have gone across the sea and that he may be still alive. They ask all their emigrant friends to look in America for a trace of their son. Even when they do not hear a word about him, they cherish hope of seeing him again some day.

In the novel *Der Viereckige oder die amerikanische Kiste* (1852), everybody wants to go to America, the incendiary, the thief, "die Kindesmörderin," the condemned criminal,—but also honest people, full of unrest and longing. A little boy, not quite five years old, comforts his poor aunt in her distress by saying: "Be of good cheer! when I have grown up, I shall go to America and send you a sackful of money."<sup>39</sup> America appears as a shining star of hope: "This whole life becomes a toilsome, restless Saturday, behind which the bright American Sunday beckons full of promise."<sup>40</sup> We learn, however, that emigration has already slackened down, since many who returned in disappointment from abroad related ghastly stories about the New World. "Just because the hopes for America were too exaggerated, too fancifully unclear, and because it was made a fabulous world, and American prosperity had become a superstition, the latter has now frequently changed to incredulity, and 'I do not believe in America' is now said with the Lachenbäuerin, and that has its good side. There will now be an end of everybody's expecting all salvation from the New World, and of the latter a clear and just conception will gain ground which ascribes corresponding values to the conditions of the old and the new life" (die die Bedingungen des alten und des neuen Lebens entsprechend würdigt).<sup>41</sup> The Viereckige too has had unpleasant experiences in America; if somebody in the village reminds him of his emigration, he always remarks: "My grandmother said, 'I do not believe in

<sup>39</sup> Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VI, 186.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Auerbach, *Ges. Schriften*, VI, 188.

America.' But I have had to believe in it, and now I am converted."<sup>42</sup>

Several years earlier, in Auerbach's *Schatzkästlein des Gevattersmanns*, a selection of stories taken from a German almanac, published from 1845 to 1848, a German emigrant presents conditions in America in a favorable light. He admits that, when he came to the other side, he had to help pave the streets for six weeks; but in this way he worked his way up and is now on the road to prosperity. He thinks that whoever is honest can get on in life in America, even if he should start with almost nothing. What he likes best in the New World is the fact that there is not any "Geburtsstolz" in that country. He declares: "Germany is my fatherland, America is our children's land," and by this he means to say that those who have been brought up in Germany seldom make their fortune in America, whereas, as a rule, their children prosper.<sup>43</sup>

Even in his later novels Auerbach frequently pictures America as a happy land. In the *Landhaus am Rhein* (5 vols., publ. 1869), we hear of the praiseworthy American custom of showing courtesy and respect towards members of the family. In another passage we are told: "That is the great thing, something that never existed before, in Americanism, that no national limitation or Philistinism (Pfahlbürgertum) oppresses the soul"<sup>44</sup> Benjamin Franklin is proclaimed the first self-made man, and a model of self-control. "Franklin did not bring new principles into the world, but he has clearly developed what an honest man can find in himself."<sup>45</sup> By a number of friends in the novel the question is discussed whether negroes can cultivate and appreciate art. When in the novel a prince reveals his

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Auerbach, *op. cit.*, I, 118.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 8.



intention of going to America, Clodwig, another character, tells him: "I think that he who has never been in America does not know what man is, when he indulges his inclinations; life over there awakens entirely new energies of the soul. In the midst of the struggle for possession of the world, everybody becomes a sort of Robinson, who must discover new sources in himself."<sup>46</sup> And again we read: "Here in Europe man wins his value through inheritance or favor of princes; an American does not want to live upon other people's favor, but wants to make something of himself."<sup>47</sup> One of the characters of the novel, Sonnenkamp, a kind of "Verbrechernatur," tells of his travels through the world. He came to America also, where he spent a very adventurous life as a gambler in New York, as a horse-thief in Arkansas, and as a Southern planter. Furthermore, he took an active part in the political struggle about abolition of slavery. He told the people that it would be sheer madness to emancipate the slaves, and that slavery was the only lasting, real benefit for a man of lower rank. Sonnenkamp's son Roland, however, has become an enthusiastic philanthropist. He crosses the Atlantic and fights against the Southern States for the emancipation of the Blacks. The last chapter of the novel contains letters from and to the New World. Here we hear of life in New York, of the war between the Northern and the Southern States, and of Lincoln's noble character and his assassination. In the novel *Der Forstmeister* (1879) one of the main characters, Ruland, has lived for years in America as a "Waldmissionar" and wants to return to this country. He is particularly interested in forestry in the United States and intends to devote all his energy to the promulgation of a law for the protection of the American forest.

More than thirty years after the story *Tolpatsch*, mentioned

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> Auerbach, *op. cit.*, II, 115.

above, there appeared, in 1876, its continuation in the novel *Der Tolpatsch aus Amerika*. Aloys, the son of that Tolpatsch who many years before had emigrated to America, comes to Germany to visit his father's native village Nordstetten, in the Black Forest. At that time, everybody in the village had relatives in the New World. Tolpatsch's son, when recognized by his father's friends, is received with wonder, curiosity, and respect. He does not like to talk much about America, as, in his opinion, the village-people too easily would consider him a boaster. But when at last he tells his story about life on the other side, he declares: "At bottom, there are no poor in our country, that is to say, only the dissolute are poor. Whoever wants to work, does not need to starve. We have a large farm in America. We do not harvest, however, with sickle and scythe, but we use a mowing machine which in one hour accomplishes as much as ten mowers in a whole day."<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Aloys points out: "We Americans have a proverb, 'Charity begins at home,' and, in addition, our principal motto is 'Help yourself.'"<sup>49</sup> Aloys, in his conversation with the village people, always uses the German language, whereas Ohlreit, a carpenter in Nordstetten, who a year before had returned from America, wants to show that he has learned some English while on the other side. Thus, he says to Aloys: "Wenn der Amerikaner ein Haus buildet, will er auch eine gute view haben, davon versteht das people hier nichts."<sup>50</sup> This is, however, the only example of the German-American mode of expression we find in the *Dorfgeschichten*. Auerbach, evidently, had heard such "Kauderwelsch" from German-Americans in Schwaben. Ivo, another inhabitant of Nordstetten, had his own ideas about America and is not attracted by glittering promises. "The

<sup>48</sup> B. Auerbachs *Säml. Schwarzsw. Dorfgeschichten* (Cotta, Volksausgabe), IX, 177.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>50</sup> Auerbachs *Säml. Schwarzsw. Dorfgeschichten*, IX, 187.

republican form of government," he says, "is certainly all right, but does not produce ideal conditions. Look around in our own country. Liberty is not lacking here, and we think that it is even better to have a prince at the head of the government than a transitory president and transitory officials. Moreover, we have an honest administration and inflexible justice. Believe me, my dear Aloys, for the sake of liberty no man will go to America any more."<sup>51</sup>

We learn from Auerbach's *Nikolaus Lenau, Erinnerung und Betrachtung* (1876), that in Lenau's last years the author of the *Dorfgeschichten* sketched out the plan of writing a novel, *Die Auswanderer*. Lenau, we are told, took great interest in this idea and promised Auerbach "a detailed account of his experiences in the New World," whereas the latter would make his friend a character of the novel, presenting him, "as he plays the violin for the peasants on the ship and becomes a myth in the new settlements in the primeval forests." Auerbach notes that Lenau, although greatly pleased with the part he would have to act, "wobei er seine Gestalt und seine Mienen seltsam ausstaffierte," was almost thrown into consternation when Auerbach urged him henceforth to draw his poetic themes from the sights and experiences of his American journey, instead of treating again such subjects as *Faust* and *Don Juan*, which had already been worn threadbare by others.

Auerbach's frequent references to America show clearly that the author was well-informed about conditions in this country, either through letters from Germans in America, or through oral accounts of such emigrants as had returned to their native country. In Swabia the novelist of the Schwarzwald was evidently in the center of the emigration movement from Germany to America in the fourth and fifth decades of the century. It is to be noted, however, that Auerbach's

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

views only reflect the popular conception of America, picturing this country as a kind of paradise. What the writer himself thought of the value of emigration, is hard to say; obviously, that depends entirely upon the character of the emigrants. Zabel is of the opinion that Auerbach is entirely a "Gefühlspolitiker" in his views about the importance of the New World for the Old, and that he lacks that competence which only personal experience can give. In addition, Zabel notes that Auerbach failed to take properly into consideration the informed judgment of such authorities as his friend Friedrich Kapp. Finally, the critic points to the fact that in his later years the Swabian writer cherished the hope that a German university would soon be instituted in America, and from this fact he derives the conviction that Auerbach was absolutely incapable of forming an accurate conception of life in foreign countries.

The great exodus to America in the thirties and forties enriched German literature not only with emigration novels, but also with a large number of emigration poems. It was Hoffmann von Fallersleben who displayed his particular gifts in this field. In his earlier poems, published in 1843, Hoffmann appears as a severe critic of America as the land of Unkultur. In the *Deutsche Lieder in der Schweiz* the poet calls out to the New World in a poem entitled "Die Neue Welt":

Die Freiheit ist dir nur ein Fetisch,  
Ein Sorgenstuhl und Schlendrian;  
Sag' an, du Krämervolk am Teetisch,  
Was hast du für die Welt getan?

Ach hättest du nur Klapperschlangen,  
Dagegen gäb's noch Hülff' und Schutz;  
Weh dir! mich schreckt mit Angst und Bangen  
Dein Schachergeist, dein Eigennutz.



Drum träuft nie Wein von deinen Reben,  
 Und deine Blumen duften nie,  
 Kein Vogel darf ein Lied erheben,  
 Und tot ist alle Poesie.<sup>52</sup>

In the following year, in 1844, the poet seems to have come to entirely different views about America. The political tyranny in Germany gave him great concern and turned his eyes longingly across the sea. His muse now hails America as the land of civic and intellectual liberty:

Freies Denken gilt,  
 Sowie freies Sprechen,  
 Nirgend, nirgend hier  
 Für ein Staatsverbrechen.  
 Hier macht kein Gendarm  
 Jemals uns Bedrängnis,  
 Und kein Bettelvogt  
 Führt uns ins Gefängnis,  
 Hier am Mississippi.

Then, in the last stanza, the poet simply calls upon the "deutscher Michel" to take heart and to emigrate, in order to become, at last, his own master across the sea.<sup>53</sup>

Hoffmann, personally, was never attracted by America and never considered for himself emigration to the New World. His own thoughts in this respect are expressed in a poem of his later years (1852), where he says:

Ich bleib' in meinem Vaterlande,  
 Sein Loos soll auch das meine sein.<sup>54</sup>

In 1845, special events in his life caused the poet to interest himself in the study of descriptive literature on America and

<sup>52</sup> Hoffmann v. Fallersleben, *op. cit.*, I, 175-176.

<sup>53</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, IV, 346.

<sup>54</sup> *Ges. Werke*, VII, 395.

to exalt the New World in enthusiastic songs. On account of revolutionary tendencies said to be contained in his *Unpolitische Lieder*, Hoffmann, in 1840, was removed as professor of the German language and literature at the University of Breslau. In 1843 he left this city and traveled for several years through Western and Northern Germany. During one of these wanderings, in October 1845, he met a group of German emigrants in Mecklenburg. Led by his friend, the clergyman Fuchs who had resigned from the ministry, they were on their way to Texas. Texas's struggle for independence from Mexico, which reached a crisis at this time, had since 1840 aroused keen interest among German emigrants. In 1842 the "Mainzer Adelsverein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas" was founded. A number of handbooks, published by Germans who had visited that state or were living there, encouraged emigration to Texas.<sup>55</sup> When Hoffmann met the emigrants, bound for Texas, in the parsonage of his friend, a lively discussion of emigration took place. Consequently, the poet began the reading of a number of books on travel in Texas<sup>56</sup> and, inspired by favorable accounts which German-Americans from Texas had given about their new settlements, composed, in the following year, the *Texanische Lieder*, published in the middle of May, 1846. In his autobiography he says: "Die Lieder waren schon Ende April druckfertig. Ich hatte mich bei meinen wenigen Hilfsmitteln doch so in Texas hineingelebt, dass ich ganz heimisch darin war und dafür und daraus dichten konnte."<sup>57</sup> In some of these poems Hoffmann extols America as the safeguard of liberty and of the dignity of man. This subject is treated in the poems "Der Stern von Texas," "Ein Guadelupe-lied," "Wohlgemeinter Rat," "Ade Deutschland," "Yankee

<sup>55</sup> G. A. Scherpf, *Entstehungsgeschichte u. gegenwärtiger Zustand des neuen unabhängigen amerikanischen Staates Texas* (1841).

<sup>56</sup> *Ges. Werke*, V, 327; VII, 398.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 398.

Dudle," and "Aus Texas."<sup>58</sup> Set to music,<sup>59</sup> these poems must have inspired many a German emigrant on his way to the distant country with courage and confidence:

Hin nach Texas, hin nach Texas,  
Wo der Stern im blauen Felde  
Eine neue Welt verkündet,  
Jedes Herz für Recht und Freiheit  
Und für Wahrheit froh entzündet,  
Dahin sehnt mein Herz sich ganz.

In the poem "Aus Texas," Hoffmann points out with warm feeling and in eloquent language that even on the lonely farm of Texas gratitude to the Fatherland never dies in the heart of a German immigrant:

Nein, ich will dein nie vergessen,  
Nie, so lang mein Geist noch denkt,  
Denn du hast die Freiheitsliebe,  
Diesen schönsten Trieb der Triebe  
Mir zuerst ins Herz gesenkt.

Könnst' ich bald den Tag erleben,  
Wo du stehest vor mir da,  
Lächelnd in der Freiheit Glanze,  
Mit dem schönsten Eichenkranze,  
Holde Maid Germania.

In other poems of the collection *Texanische Lieder* the life and work of German settlers in Texas is vividly presented, as in the poems "Der deutsche Hinterwäldler," "Nacht in der Prärie," "Der Schütz von Bragos," "Heimatklänge in Texas."<sup>60</sup> Here we see the prosperous, sturdy German backwoodsman in the Urwald in the manifold pursuits of his daily life:

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 3-18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>60</sup> *Werke*, V, 5-11.

Eine Büchse zum Jagen, zum Schutz und zur Wehr,  
Ein paar Ochsen zum Pflügen, was brauch' ich noch mehr?

Mein Gebiet ist umzäunet, mein Feld ist bestellt,  
Mein Blockhaus ist fertig, ich lach' in die Welt.

Ich sitz' auf dem Mustang, die Büchs' auf dem Knie,  
So trab' ich, so jag' ich, durch Wald und Prärie.

A more lyric note prevails in the "Heimatklänge in Texas," where the German settler is represented as resting from the strenuous work of the day and thinking of his dear folks at home:

Vor der Türe sitzt der Pflanzer,  
Mild umglänzt vom Mondenschein,  
Und er singt zur Mändoline  
In die stille Nacht hinein.  
Seiner Kindheit denkt er wieder,  
Und ihm wird so freudebang,  
Hört die Abendglocken läuten,  
Hört der Weidenflöte Klang.

Historical episodes of the Texan war for independence are treated in the poems "Der Fall von Bexar," "Sturmlied am San Jacinto," "Der alte Sam."<sup>61</sup>

From the foregoing it is plain that the conditions in Texas, as depicted in Hoffmann's cycle of emigration poems, appear in a romantic, ideal splendor. The poet himself admits that, when he composed these poems, his idea was not so much to draw an exact picture of life in that state, but rather "to express wishes and hopes, the realization of which could be a justification and comfort to others."<sup>62</sup>

In 1848, Adolf Schults<sup>63</sup> dedicated *Lieder aus Wisconsin*

<sup>61</sup> *Werke*, V, 7-16.

<sup>62</sup> *Werke*, IV, 264.

<sup>63</sup> Adolf Schults (1820-1858), born in Elberfeld, a journalist and gifted



to his friend Dr. C. de Haas, who had exchanged the position of a teacher in the Wuppertal, in Rhenish Prussia, for the work of a farmer in Fond du Lac, in Wisconsin. In these poems, inspired by Freiligrath's exotic enthusiasms as well as by his own social-political ideas, Schults draws brilliant pictures of the virgin soil of the primeval forest in America, of the mightily rushing Missouri, and of the whole country, "voll Kraft und voll Gedeihen," as it expands the human heart. These poems were written after Haas's coming to America, and undoubtedly reflect first-hand knowledge of nature in Wisconsin, derived from letters of Schults's friend. As the poet himself states:

Dein Gruss hat diese Klänge  
 Geweckt im Busen mir;  
 Nun send ich die Gesänge  
 Zum Gegengrusse dir.

He depicts realistically and in glowing colors the raging forest-fire in the American wilderness:

Siehst du steigen die Rauchessäulen?  
 Siehst du am Himmel die rote Glut?  
 Hörst du ferne des Windes Heulen?  
 Hörst du zischender Flammen Wut?

Siehst du sie gierig züngelnd lecken,  
 Feuigen Riesenschlangen gleich?  
 Hörst du den Stier in Wut und Schrecken  
 Brüllen, als träf' ihn Beilesstreich?

Auf! Entfleuch mit des Windes Eile,  
 Auf, und rette dich in dein Boot!  
 Rüstigen Arms die Wogen teile,  
 Dass du entrinnst dem Feuertod!

Drüben am Ufer magst du rasten,  
 Schauen ein Schauspiel, nie gekannt,

---

lyric poet, was a member of the literary group of Wuppertal writers, to which the well-known Emil Rittershaus belonged.

Fassen, was nie deine Sinne fassten,  
Staunend schauen den Urwaldbrand.<sup>64</sup>

Although Schults's *Lieder aus Wisconsin* are not of great merit according to the rules of poetic art, they contain many picturesque descriptions and excel in great warmth of feeling. When we remember that the poet did not know this country from personal observation, we must give him credit for the masterly skill with which he has succeeded in picturing the exotic nature of America.<sup>65</sup>

In reviewing our chapter, we note that the great emigration movement from Germany to America in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century has been clearly reflected and occupies a not unimportant place in the German literature of that time. Three noted authors about the mid-century concern themselves in their works with emigration to the New World: Hoffmann von Fallersleben in the north, Auerbach in the south, and Ludwig in Central Germany. From these sections they

<sup>64</sup> Schults, *op. cit.*, no. 23.

<sup>65</sup> Not only in the Fatherland, but also in America, Germans, at the end of our period, began to write poems in praise of their new home-land. An *Oregonlied*, set to music by Alexander Conge, was published in 1846 by an anonymous German-American in a Wisconsin newspaper. In one of the stanzas, we see German immigrants wandering through the vast expanse of America toward the West, and hear them singing:

Unübersehbar vor uns  
Blüht, duftet die Prärie,  
Des Urwalds Wipfel rauschen  
In wilder Poesie.  
Und über Fels und Schluchten  
Ziehn mutig wir voran,  
Das Sternenbanner pflanzen  
Wir auf in Oregon.

Alexander Ziegler, *Skizzen einer Reise durch Nordamerika und Westindien* (1848), p. 308.

saw numerous emigrants depart for America and were so affected and inspired by the heart-breaking scenes on such occasions that the emigrant became a prominent figure in their imagination and their works. Ludwig gave special expression to the deep feelings of sorrow and hope which move the emigrant's heart when he leaves his native land. Auerbach shows us how deeply the Black Forest was affected by the emigration movement of our period and how strong were the bonds which connected that district with the New World. We learn from his novels the views of the people of the Schwarzwald about America, what attracted them most to our country, and, above all, we are informed of the impressions which the newcomers gained about conditions, customs, economic prospects, and civic liberty in the United States. These accounts reflect, however, exclusively the conception of America as formed in the minds of German peasants, and they cannot be regarded as forming an accurate picture of life in this country. In his later novels Auerbach gives much space to the treatment of the negro in America and to the political and military struggle for the emancipation of the slaves. To Hoffmann von Fallersleben, on the other hand, we owe the beautiful *Texan Songs*, which show us the German settler at work and at rest on his farm in Texas, happy in his prosperous, independent life, but thinking with sadness of the days of his childhood in the beloved Fatherland. Another poet who depicted conditions in a particular state of the Union is Adolf Schults, who in about thirty songs makes us acquainted with some of the picturesque scenery of Wisconsin. A comprehensive picture of America and the Americans, as it figured in the imagination of cultured people in Germany in the thirties, has been drawn by Willkomm in the *Europamiiden*. Here we become acquainted with people who have completely thrown off the Old World and its culture, and with the keenest expectations and fantastic hopes look toward the rising sun in the great

Western Republic. If we cannot gain an accurate conception of life in this country from Schefer's novel, we learn at least how America reflected itself in the imagination of a German traveler who felt wretchedly disappointed when he compared the fantastic accounts of America, circulated in numerous pamphlets and books, with the actual conditions which he found on the other side. The German emigration literature, as discussed in this chapter, is mainly a product of the transition period. Romantic influence is still strong. It is reflected particularly in Willkomm's novel and in Hoffmann's *Texanische Lieder*. On the other hand, decided progress has been made toward a more realistic conception of America. It is not so much America's nature and liberty in general of which we hear, but rather life in the New World, especially the life of the German settler in certain territories of the Union, is presented to us. The description of a farmer's life in Auerbach's novels, the portrayal of the American Burton by Willkomm, the account of economic conditions in Germany which caused emigration, by Schefer, and the presentation of a forest-fire by Schefer and Schults—all are pictures taken from reality and are based on a detailed knowledge of facts derived from the numerous books of travel, from private correspondence, and from personal relations with German emigrants and German-American settlers. Although in most of these pictures conditions in America appear in a favorable light, criticism of the characteristic features of our country is not altogether wanting. This criticism is pronounced by Willkomm with fair judgment, but becomes extremely acid in Schefer and Krakenfuss. From a literary point of view, Hoffmann von Fallersleben's *Texanische Lieder*, and, as a cultural document, Willkomm's *Europamüden* must be considered the most valuable works of the German emigration literature of our period.



## CHAPTER VIII

### AMERICA IN THE LITERATURE OF YOUNG GERMANY

In the course of the romantic-realistic transition period a new literary movement, traditionally known as Young Germany, arose, which manifested a particular interest in the actual conditions in America. Although the writers of this literary group had no well-defined program, they stood together on the common ground of opposition to all reactionary tendencies in political, intellectual, and private life. They were cosmopolitans, absorbed in the social problems of their time, and much concerned about the decadence of European culture. All these features, of course, considerably influenced the attitude of Young Germany towards America and produced in the minds and the literature of the writers a conception of the Western World that was quite different from the traditional views of the Romanticists.

How deeply the writers of Young Germany were interested in the conditions in the United States, and how earnestly they devoted their attention to the study of the country, is evidenced by various references to America in the journals of Young Germany.<sup>1</sup> In the *Literarischer Zodiakus*, a monthly, published in 1835 and 1836 by Theodor Mundt, we find reviews of Schefer's *Meine Probefahrt nach Amerika*,<sup>2</sup> of Bollmann's memoirs,<sup>3</sup> and of Eduard Duller's *Atlantis*<sup>4</sup> (Phantasie eines

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Zeitschriften des Jungen Deutschlands*, ed. by Houben.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 177.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 198, 208-211.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 234.

politischen Gefangenen), an epic poem, wherein the author extols freedom of thought as one of the fundamental principles of the Western Republic. The *Phoenix* (*Frühlingszeitung für Deutschland*), a daily published by Duller from 1835 to 1838, contains, among other references to the New World, *Reiseszenen aus Amerika*<sup>5</sup> by Dr. Adrian, and a criticism of Sealsfield's *Lebensbilder aus beiden Hemisphären* by Karl Gutzkow, who finds fault with the "Cooper'sche Teergeruch" in the novels and with the "mephistophelische Humanitätstheorien" of the author.<sup>6</sup> Other issues of this journal give accounts of American architecture,<sup>7</sup> the Revolutionary War,<sup>8</sup> American poets,<sup>9</sup> the character of American nationality,<sup>10</sup> American liberty,<sup>11</sup> American journalism,<sup>12</sup> American landscape painters,<sup>13</sup> American republicanism, novels, and aborigines,<sup>14</sup> and newspapers in Pittsburgh.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in a review of the history of the *Phoenix*, the editor recalls Gutzkow's statement in regard to his break with Menzel, where he says that in showing his antagonism to the author of the *Geist der Geschichte*, "he wanted to honor America, the last hope for many, the continuous object of Menzel's invectives."<sup>16</sup> Very critical is an opinion, reflecting American cultural conditions, in the periodical *Europa, Chronik der gebildeten Welt*<sup>17</sup> by August Lewald, a journalistic writer of

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 21.

<sup>6</sup> II, 156.

<sup>7</sup> II, 89.

<sup>8</sup> II, 357.

<sup>9</sup> II, 105-6.

<sup>10</sup> *Zeitschriften des Jungen Deutschlands*, II, 105.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> II, 207.

<sup>13</sup> II, 333.

<sup>14</sup> II, 311, 305, 404.

<sup>15</sup> II, 138.

<sup>16</sup> II, 419.

<sup>17</sup> Published yearly in two volumes, from 1835-1846.

Young Germany. In a letter dated Bremen, December, 1836, and published in the *Europa* in 1837, the anonymous writer bitterly complains of the "Menschenhandel" in German emigration to America, and, in this connection, criticizes the character of the Americans. He says: "For the love of money we built huge arks to bring thousands of deluded countrymen into the land of prosaic tediousness and hardheartedness. Furthermore, we extorted from them the last coins presenting the images of the sovereigns whom they left, and then we surrendered them to a nation which, although it has hands fit for the lowest work, does not welcome anything that is beautiful and anything that promotes morals and humanity, to a nation where, by the dozen, sons of respectable European families, deceived in their expectations, and not without intelligence, are beating rough stones on highroads for the even rougher, presumptuous Americans, in order to keep body and soul together in a country from which they do not want to return as prodigal sons, driven by poverty and a wrong sense of shame."<sup>18</sup>

A brief review of these references to America in the journals of Young Germany reveals the fact that in those literary circles much credit was given to the marvelous rise of the New World in the earlier decades of the century, but that cold selfishness and love of money were considered as characteristic features of American life.

Turning now to the views on America as expressed in the works of the most prominent representatives of Young Germany, we find that Ludwig Börne, first of all a political writer, was throughout his life an enthusiastic admirer of the United States as the land of free men. In the *Fragmente und Aphorismen* (1830) Börne speaks with heartfelt sympathy of the

<sup>18</sup> *Europa*, 1837, I, 279.

German emigrants, "who, having a foreboding of Europe's winter, like birds of passage remove to a warmer country, where they will find food in the open air and do not have to wait anxiously till presumptuous servants of princes offer them miserable crumbs."<sup>19</sup> They are looking towards America, he says, as the land of mighty streams and vast forests, full of blossoms and fragrance. After long sufferings they will find there a place to lay their heads, gray with age, for rest and death, where undisturbed their sons will rock the cradles of their grandchildren. Börne believes in America's high mission in the history of the world. He says: "Asia was the cradle of the human race; Europe saw the joy, the vigor, and the exuberance of the youth of mankind. In America the fulness and wisdom of the manly age develop themselves"<sup>20</sup> In the *Briefe aus Paris* (1832) the writer jestingly declares that he himself would like to go to America except for the fear that, as soon as about forty thousand Germans had settled on the Ohio and discussed the organization of a new State, three thousand nine hundred ninety-nine of those good people would pass a resolution to send for a beloved German prince to become the head of that State.<sup>21</sup> But in his longing for political liberty in Germany Börne regrets "that under many difficulties and great dangers German emigrants must seek America across the sea, instead of bringing America comfortably and safely into the Fatherland." He adds: "America may be left to the princes and may give them an asylum; there some day they too will learn to love liberty, when they recognize that the New World protects even tyrants in their deserved misfortune."<sup>22</sup> In another letter this German protagonist of political freedom extols American

<sup>19</sup> Börne, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII, 101 f.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Börne, *Ges. Schriften*, XI, 81.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 208 f.



liberty with all its splendid consequences for Europe.<sup>23</sup> Again, he ridicules the nervous apprehensions with which reactionary governments in the Old World follow the favorable political development of the United States. "Indeed," he says, "this America pains them like a sore tooth and disturbs their sleep. Could the tooth only be drawn!"<sup>24</sup> He notes that in the opinion of these governments the term "republic" suggests the guillotine, and the term "liberty," blood. They hope for a better future, he thinks, that is, for a revolution in the New World, resulting in the establishment of a monarchy, and they fancy that the bonds which so far have held the Union together will soon loosen. In addition, Börne is enraged at the stupidity of those who, scornfully pointing to America, exclaim: "A fine republic, fine liberty, where slavery rules!" As if, he notes, liberty could change men into angels and root out vices and weaknesses, and as if it could remove hail, floods, diseases, or even make man immortal. "It is astonishing," he goes on, "what nonsense they talk in their despair." (Börne, *Menzel der Franzosenfresser*, 1837.)<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, in the *Fragmente und Aphorismen*,<sup>26</sup> mentioned above, the political essayist of Young Germany rebuffs the reactionary Baron von Eckstein, who in a treatise "Lafayette und die Amerikamanie"<sup>27</sup> had called the craze about America a plague and had questioned Lafayette's honesty. Finally, in the contemporary *Kritiken* (1830), in an essay on Cooper's novels, Börne reflects with shame upon the fact that the Germans have no Cooper among their writers and in novelistic literature have been surpassed by the Americans, "so ein junges Volk, das kaum die schwäbische Reife erlangt

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 261.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>25</sup> Börne, *Ges. Schriften*, VI, 392 f.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 181.

<sup>27</sup> Published in the *Offenbacher Staatsmann* at the end of the twenties.

hat.”<sup>28</sup> Although he does not consider Cooper a genius, he gives him credit for presenting in his novels youthful, vigorous characters, as primitive as the nature of their country, and also for throwing into bold relief the conditions of their life, their defects and vices, their pleasures and their grief, their rights and their duties, in contrast to the dull and artificial characterization in the novels of German Romanticism. In this connection the writer praises the love of justice prevailing in the United States. “There the law of the citizens and the States is shining, strong, and distinctly marked, as if it had come from the mint of nature, not soiled by the hands of corrupt judges, not worn out and clipped by thousands of fingers of hundreds of clerks, advocates, and censors of justice.”

Börne’s attitude toward America is, as we have seen, entirely friendly. He recommends this country to the German emigrants particularly for its grand scenery, its liberal institutions, and for the unaffected, honest character of its population. Through his acquaintance with the works of American authors and through his personal relations with many German emigrants the disciple of Young Germany was well informed about conditions in the New World; but from his exclusively favorable references to our country in his works it appears that his hatred of autocracy in Europe led him to be quite uncritical in his praise of American liberty.

Like Börne, his fellow-combatant in the war for intellectual freedom in Germany, Heinrich Heine at the beginning of his career as a prose-writer (1826-1830) found in America the ideal of political liberty. No other German writer in those years had felt more deeply than he that bitter, pessimistic melancholy which was an essential characteristic of his time. Again and again we find the term “europamüde” in Heine’s works.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Börne, *Ges. Schriften*, V, 235 f.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Elster, I, 408; III, 373, 494; VII, 375.

This term seems to have been coined by him, as it occurs, probably for the first time in German literature, in his *Englische Fragmente* (1828), where the author says, "so recht europamüde, wie ich mich damals fühlte."<sup>30</sup> From there the term was later taken over by Immermann in his *Münchhausen*<sup>31</sup> and became a catchword through Willkomm's famous novel.

In the *Reise von München nach Genua*, written in 1828, Heine regards the free States of America as the refuge for all lovers of liberty. He says: "Even if all Europe became one dungeon, there would now be still another hole for escaping, that is America, and, thank God! that hole is even bigger than the dungeon itself."<sup>32</sup> A few years later, in an essay "Einleitung zu Kahldorf über den Adel" (1831), the writer praises Lafayette, the hero of two hemispheres and of two centuries, who with the argonauts of liberty had returned from America, whence he brought to Europe the golden fleece, the idea of a free constitution.<sup>33</sup>

These are, however, the only passages in Heine's works where the author speaks favorably of our country. The fact remains, as we shall see, that he never showed any real sympathy for the United States. The friendly attitude reflected in his earlier works soon changes into the contrary, into the most violent criticism of America's democracy and Unkultur. Even as early as 1826, in the *Reisebilder*, this aversion is noticeable, for Heine ventures the prophecy that the liberal political development of the Union would be short-lived, and that sooner or later the governors of the States would become sovereigns.<sup>34</sup> Much more pronounced is this unfavorable criticism in the *Fran-*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 494.

<sup>31</sup> Immermann, *op. cit.*, I, 23.

<sup>32</sup> *Sämtl. Werke*, III, 279.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 58.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 110.

*zösische Zustände* (1832), where the author speaks of "amerikanische Lebensmonotonie, Farblosigkeit und Spiessbürgerei."<sup>35</sup> In the treatise *Ludwig Börne* (1840) Heine ridicules certain fantastic accounts of America which circulated in Germany at that time, and he mentions as an example the story of a German journeyman who returned from America and told him that on the streets of American cities big turtles were creeping about, on the backs of which there was written in chalk, where and when they would be served up as turtle-soup.<sup>36</sup> Heine's antipathy to America reaches its climax in the passage of his *Börne* where he speaks of America as the "ungeheures Freiheitsgefängnis, wo der widerwärtigste aller Tyrannen, der Pöbel, seine rohe Herrschaft ausübt," and as the "gottverfluchtes Land," which he once loved, when he did not know it, which, however, he must now publicly praise and extol "aus Metierpflicht." Sarcastically he says to "his dear German peasants": "Don't go to America! there are neither princes nor nobles; there all people are equal, the same churls, to be sure with the exception of some millions who have a black or brown skin and are treated like dogs." With burning indignation Heine gives vent further to his anger at the brutality with which free negroes are treated by the very people who brag of their Christianity. "Material profit is their real religion," he exclaims, "and money is their god, their only, almighty god." If any one should dare protest against such selfishness and injustice, "he would encounter a martyrdom surpassing all European conceptions."<sup>37</sup>

But not only in his prose works does Heine so shamefully abuse America; the same harsh criticism is found later in his poems. In "Jetzt wohin?," a poem of the *Romanzero* (1851), the following notorious passage occurs:

<sup>35</sup> *Sämtl. Werke*, V, 89.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Sämtl. Werke*, VII, 44 f.



Manchmal kommt mir in den Sinn  
 Nach Amerika zu segeln,  
 Nach dem grossen Freiheitsstall,  
 Der bewohnt von Gleichheitsflegeln.<sup>38</sup>

In the sad, satirical romance "Bimini" (1851) Heine ridicules the conception of the Romanticists who represented America as a wonderland, the land of the new blue flower, as the New World "with new beasts, new trees, new flowers and birds, and with new 'Weltkrankheiten.'" The ship on which Romanticism sails to this new world is described as follows:

Phantasie sitzt an dem Steuer,  
 Gute Laune bläht die Segel,  
 Schiffsjung ist der Witz, der flinke,  
 Ob Verstand an Bord? Ich weiss nicht.

Meine Rahen sind Metaphern,  
 Die Hyperpel ist mein Mastbaum,  
 Schwarz-rot-gold ist meine Flagge,  
 Fabelfarben der Romantik.<sup>39</sup>

In the romance "Vitzlipuzli" (1851) the poet contrasts America at the time of her discovery, as she "glänzet noch in Fluten-frische," with the America of his time, when she already "europäisiert abwelkt."<sup>40</sup> Helene Herrmann, in her valuable essay *Studien zu Heines Romanzero* (1906), notes that the German poet drew the historical and descriptive material for his presentation of America in the two romances, above mentioned, from works of American literature. Heine's source for "Bimini" was Washington Irving's *Voyage and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus*<sup>41</sup> (1831); in regard to "Vitzlipuzli" the poet drew his information from W. Bullock's *Six Months' Residence and*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 412.

<sup>39</sup> *Sämtl. Werke*, II, 125.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 373.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 513.

*Travels in Mexico in 1823*. Heine's indignation at the cruel, inhuman treatment of the slaves by the Americans suggested the theme of the ghastly poem "Das Sklavenschiff" (1853).<sup>42</sup> The scene represents a Dutch ship, which is transporting a load of wretched captives from Senegal to Rio de Janeiro. A great number of those poor creatures perish wretchedly during the voyage and are mercilessly thrown overboard to become victims of sea monsters.

In comparing the views of Börne and Heine on America, it is interesting to note the marked divergence in their conceptions. Whereas Young Germany's foremost publicist is outspoken in his praise of the New World as a refuge for oppressed Europeans and as the land of the future, the great poet in his days of maturity, at least, considers the much heralded liberty in the Western Republic nothing more than a farce and sees there a tyranny of the masses worse than the oppression of free thought in Europe. He hates democracy as mob-rule and vents his anger on the commercial spirit of the Americans and their contempt for the black race. This striking difference in the judgment of America by the two writers evidently results from a deep-seated antagonism in their natures and social ideas. It is true, both authors were champions of liberty. But Börne was a democratic publicist who never felt at home in drawing-rooms, but only among plain artisans and in gatherings of German emigrants. Heine, on the contrary, was an aristocratic poet, of whom Brandes says: "All mediocrity, liberal and republican mediocrity included, he abhors as inimical to great individuality, to great liberty. Hence his distrust of the North American Republic, his want of enthusiasm for its liberty."<sup>43</sup>

That Heine did not stand alone among the writers of Young Germany in his aversion to America as a country where a

<sup>42</sup> *Sämtl. Werke*, II, 117.

<sup>43</sup> G. Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, VI, 115.

cultured German could never feel at home, will be clearly seen when we now turn to the discussion of Laube's attitude towards the New World. Heinrich Laube, playwright, novelist, and journalist of Young Germany, left no doubt in his works that, in his opinion, the Americans did not measure up to the standard of a civilized nation, and that the traditional conception of this country as the land of the free was a mistake. In an essay "Der neue Unbekannte," contained in the *Moderne Charakteristiken* (1835), Laube complains, as Hauff had done before him, of the keen interest which in recent years the reading public in Germany had taken in Cooper's and Irving's novels. He attributes this interest to the belief in the catch-phrase "europamüde," denoting that Europe was weary of life, "eine abgelebte Matrone." The author states that he himself does not share this opinion about Europe's old age at all. He declares that in spite of the rational foundation and the rapid political development of the Western Republic the Europeans would soon become weary of the New World and at present were fascinated by it only through the charm of novelty. "Our modern sympathies," he says, "in spite of all their ironical element, are diametrically opposed to America, and a society without a history seems void of interest to us."<sup>44</sup> He maintains that "die geheimnisvolle Poesie des Geschichtlichen" was not foreign to Young Germany, but rather a part of its life. "We are not Americans; the prosaic Philistines, concerned only about their daily life, are not at all our comrades. Without Europe America would never have attracted our readers; the interest in the primeval forests was a diversion, which may well have been allowed to the weary public as a relief and a means of regaining its mental repose. The background of all American history has always been Europe." In order to prove his assertion that the Europeans took America into account only as a

<sup>44</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, II, 345 ff.

"Reiz der Neuheit," Laube points to the great success which the works of Sealsfield, the "neue Unbekannte," had in Germany. He says that, contrary to European views, this author judged conditions in America without prejudice; he presented the Americans as "naiv" and laid stress upon their unaffected human nature, whereas he often used harsh words when he spoke of Europe.

From these remarks of Laube it appears that his opposition to America was based on certain historico-philosophical conceptions at which he had arrived in the course of his intellectual development. As Przygodda says of him: "Der liberale Radikalismus weicht dem historisch orientierten und an Hegel angeschlossenen Liberalismus."<sup>45</sup> Because Laube had learned from Walter Scott "die geheimnisvolle Poesie des Geschichtlichen," he is not interested in a country that is only in the initial stage of its cultural development.

Much more pronounced than in his essay of 1835 appears Laube's antagonism to America in the Zeitroman *Das junge Europa* (1833-1837). This novel is the more important for our discussion as it clearly reflects the range of ideas of Young Germany. The three chief characters of the story, Constantin, Valerius, and Hippolyt, are true representatives of the confused state of mind in that transitional period. Thus, Constantin, the enthusiastic champion of political liberty, voices the general conditions of the thirties, when he says: "If we all were not morbidly concerned about the future, we would have a stronger present."<sup>46</sup> He openly professes Young German cosmopolitanism and thinks that the course of the world's history necessarily tends to a gradual suppression of all nationalism.<sup>47</sup> He hails with enthusiasm the struggle for the sovereignty of the people

<sup>45</sup> P. Przygodda, "H. Laubes literarische Frühzeit," p. 150.

<sup>46</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, I, 58.

<sup>47</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, I, 59.



and sees the time not far distant, when the rights of man will come to their own in the world, when there will be no difference between rulers and ruled and everyone can become President of his republican government.<sup>48</sup> Valerius, the hero of the second book of the novel, wants to go to Warsaw "to fight for the sacred rights of a people against its tyrants."<sup>49</sup> Disappointed at the defeat of the Poles, he turns from the revolutionary tendencies of his earlier years to a calmer and more resigned disposition, and finds comfort in the thought that "from time to time the world becomes rejuvenated through fresh nations, untouched by all culture."<sup>50</sup> He admits that in view of the varied and infinite nature of conditions in the world many fantastic plans of their childhood to reform the world had to be given up. Although Constantin is glad that the age of Romanticism has passed, he cannot reconcile himself to the spirit of materialism which characterizes the new times. "The poesy of knighthood we have overthrown, and of the poesy of liberalism we are for the present deprived. Will the time come, and when will it come, when the money-interests will again occupy a secondary, supporting position, not the ruling position?"<sup>51</sup> Despairing of his own country, Hippolyt, a political and moral libertine, joins the republicans in France, but there he cannot get rid of the thought, "dies Volk sei eigentlich der Schalksnarr unserer Weltregierung, des Herrgotts Komödienhaus."<sup>52</sup> The Englishmen are the particular object of his ridicule. "To me they are intolerable," he says. "I am interested in the great poem of liberty and beauty rather than in their first rudiments."<sup>53</sup> Thus, he makes up his mind to emigrate to America,

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 153.

<sup>51</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, II, 160.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

where he hopes to find that happiness which he seeks. Never again will he set his foot on Europe's soil. If he should not like the Yankees, he would go to the redskins in the forests. "They have little culture, but for that reason also little that is tainted."<sup>54</sup> Valerius knows very well that across the sea even greater disappointment awaits his friend and warns him: "Horror will strike you in the free world of America. There liberty is a problem in arithmetic and even worse than that which drives you from Europe. An arithmetical problem, a frame-work of liberty is to the poetical mind much more intolerable than a spirit of submissiveness when covered over with the moss of the historical past."<sup>55</sup> Hippolyt, however, keeps to his decision and crosses the sea. But there, in the New World, all his hopes and expectations come to grief at once, and he exclaims: "Terrible disappointment! Oh, it is terrible! Harden my fist, Pluto, that I may dash to pieces this caricature of a new world. Liberty I hoped to find, and I find the most beggarly poverty. Gold they have and look for, but not life; they have left on the other side all the wealth of man, his joy, his complaints, his longing, 'seinen Feind, sein ewiges Herz, seine schaukelnden Gedanken, seine Titanengedanken, seine Wollust, seine Verzweiflung, den ganzen Roman des Menschen, um den allein es sich lohnt, morgens aufzustehn, abends sich niederzulegen, alles das haben sie jenseits des Meeres gelassen, davon sind sie frei, das ist ihre Freiheit. Auch das Tier ist frei von menschlicher Sorge—oh!'"<sup>56</sup> With even greater bitterness Hippolyt gives vent to his despair in a letter to Valerius: "The fellow," he writes, "who shines my shoes, a regular stupid, wants to be treated like a lord;—indeed, you were right, Valerius; they debased equality of rights (gleiche Berechtigung) by changing

<sup>54</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, II, 299.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>56</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, II, 298.

it into equality of man (Gleichheit). And then, these negroes! How dreadfully liberty is outraged! He who has not been a servant, too, is called an aristocrat; he whose face is colored differently is called a dog, is kicked and crushed. All the prose of Europe has here gotten the upper hand. I am suffocating here.—No history, no liberal scholarship, no liberal arts! Free trade is the only form of liberty they know, ‘ein Gott von Pappe, in allerlei kleinen Buchbinderausgaben, ein Gott, dem man keinen Geschmack zutraut, weil man selbst keinen hat,’—a new world which has inherited only a few figures from the old. Whatever does not bring in a good deal of money is useless; whatever is of no practical use is superfluous. O glorious delight, gained from noble culture, why did I throw thee away! A school of business which pretends to be a world is taking its revenge on me.”<sup>57</sup> In a riot in the streets of New York Hippolyt is killed by a former rival. Margarete, who had followed her fiancé across the sea, informs Valerius of the heroic death of his friend. “Like an angry demi-god,” she writes, “he stood firm against the surging mob and told his assailants with a thundering voice that they were a base mob, trampling under foot human rights and freedom.”<sup>58</sup> Margarete herself now wants to join the redskins in the forests or to seek solitude. “There are no longer monasteries left,” she says, “but the primeval forest has not yet been conquered; there is still room for dying.”

Doubtless Hippolyt’s views not only reflect Laube’s own attitude toward America, but also give striking expression to the sad feeling of German poetry in general in the thirties at the low standards of the modern world, including America, in the sphere of intellectual refinement. Indeed, the author of *Das Junge Europa*, this well-bred son of European culture, expresses the views of many of his educated contemporaries in Germany,

<sup>57</sup> Laube, *op. cit.*, II, 299.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

when he feels no liking for a country where he sees only realistic and preponderantly materialistic forces at work.

A more detached observer than Laube, Karl Gutzkow, looked on the position of America among the nations of the world with the eyes of a Realpolitiker. This topic he discussed at length in an essay entitled "Die neue Welt," contained in the *Zeitgenossen* (1837), a collection of papers which were later published under the title *Säkularbilder*. The views here expressed are deserving of detailed analysis, as they undoubtedly reflect the opinions of a large group of the sophisticated younger intellects of Germany in the later thirties.

At the beginning of the essay this author also criticizes the purely materialistic, calculating character of the American people. "If anything is characteristic of the New World," he says, "it is the tendency of the Americans to fix a value on everything in heaven and earth. To the Americans everything has a proportional value that can be expressed in figures. It is unbelievable how easily the American can estimate in money the most subtle ideas. Even such imponderables as God, liberty, immortality, metaphysics possess weight for him. His whole mind is concerned with reducing all things to a monetary value."<sup>59</sup> This characteristic feature of the Americans results, according to the writer, from the fact that political, intellectual, and material life in the New World has its roots in a rugged soil. Nevertheless, he thinks, the philosophy of history as well as the presentation of history to-day must take America into account.

Gutzkow then turns to a detailed discussion of the relation of Europe to America. In this field he finds two conceptions prevalent among students of the history of the United States in Europe. "One of these conceptions, favoring Europe, calls the States the epigones of history and concedes to them nothing

<sup>59</sup> Gutzkow, *Gesammelte Werke*, VII, No. 3, p. 82 f.



but formalism. The other conception, of democratic origin, awards the triumphal wreath for the most perfect government to the transatlantic country and calls on Europe to win this crown in the way America has. The same country that to the former critics appears as trivial, is to the latter an abode of liberty and equality. The former think that in the course of time America will change to a monarchy; the others, that Europe, through America, will become a republic."

At this point of his discussion the author raises the interesting question: Has America a mission in the world or has she to accomplish a special task? His answer is: "America has a great mission; tending toward an idea, it is the idea of democracy which she cultivates in its greatness as well as in its one-sidedness." But this mission, the writer notes, must be restricted to the New World; as soon as America, in carrying out her mission, directs her attention primarily to Europe, the dissolution of the United States will at once begin. In this connection, the following opinion offered by the Young German essayist is of particular interest for us today. He notes: "Hardly can it ever happen that an American fleet can participate in a European war."<sup>60</sup> Gutzkow, furthermore, recognizes the outstanding features in the national character of America, such as practical activity, intellectual disposition, temperance, self-control, enlightenment, industrialism, the political civilization of the Yankee. But in his opinion America is unfit as a Kulturträger mainly for two reasons. The first obstacle is the shocking heartlessness and lack of feeling with which citizens of the United States deal with the aborigines; the second results from the fact that in America religion is only a business of the individual, but not of the commonwealth. The writer concludes this part of his discussion by pointing out: "Indeed, to dis-

<sup>60</sup> "Schwerlich kommt es je dazu, dass sich eine amerikanische Flotte an einem europäischen Kriege beteiligt."

seminate clearer political ideas through South America, Eastern Asia, and Australia seems to me the great mission of the United States."

In the next chapter of his essay Gutzkow then advances the assertion that for Europe the United States is of no great importance. "The elements," he says, "of which our conditions are composed are complex, whereas those of America are simple. The American ideal of liberty is not ours. The ideal liberty of Europe is more comprehensive; it comprises the world. It will certainly come about that America can be a warning and a lesson for Europe, but only in a few instances a model." To prove this assertion, Gutzkow asks and answers the three following questions:

1. What advantages has America over Europe?

2. What advantages has Europe over America?

3. Wherein lies the analogy between the two continents? In answering the first question the writer makes the following statements:

- a. The United States has been established along primitive lines. Its foundation is the "contrat social."

- b. In America revolution is a thing of the past, whereas Europe has yet to reckon with a much more violent revolution.

- c. America has, in the strict sense of the term, no foreign policy.

- d. The United States has not the problem of a surplus population.

- e. The character of the European resembles a branching forest-tree which is growing up "kraus and confus"; the character of the American is like a slender willow.

- f. Religion excites the American less than the European; in America religion is regarded mainly as a source of liberty.

The second question, what advantages has Europe over America, is answered as follows:

a. The advantage of a boundless past. History is a legacy of which Europe is the administrator. "It is a grandmother's recollection for us to which we owe reverence."

b. America, the land of business-offices and slaves, has neither art nor philosophy; "it has a literature consisting of only a few novels which smell of pitch and tar, and a number of poems, the originals of which are found in England."

Thirdly, wherein lies the analogy between Europe and America? America has slavery, Europe has feudalism, both of which can be extirpated only with difficulty. Slavery in the New World produces such intolerance that journalists advocating emancipation are shot to death. Gutzkow points to the serious consequences of this evil for America. He says: "If this unrestrained and tyrannical spirit should gain ground, America will have to abandon the high standard to which she has risen, owing partly to the splendid occurrences of a revolution which was not especially difficult, followed later by public prosperity, but owing chiefly to a great deal of vainglory. America will have to abandon her simple and somewhat spiritless conceptions of liberty, if she continues to apply these conceptions so dishonestly in the struggle against the colored population."

Gutzkow's essay on the New World reveals the gratifying fact that at last German literature begins to devote its attention to a close study of America and to do justice to her national characteristics.<sup>61</sup> If we, today, after nearly a century which has

<sup>61</sup> The influence of Tocqueville's *La démocratie en Amérique* seems noticeable; the first volumes were published in 1835.—Within the sphere of historical and political literature, the national characteristics of America were discussed by the following German writers, some of whom might possibly have influenced Gutzkow: L. Kufahl, *Die Geschichte der Ver. Staaten von Nordamerika* (1832); Fr. Schmidt, *Versuch über den polit. Zustand der Ver. Staaten* (1822); G. Hülse-mann, *Geschichte der Demokratie in den Ver. Staaten* (1823); Robert von Mohl, *Das Bundes-Staatsrecht der Ver. Staaten* (1824); Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1823-1827); Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851).

witnessed an incomparable rise of our country in its economic life and, through the course of historical events, has also given to the Republic a commanding position among the great powers of Europe, feel obliged to come to conclusions quite different from those advanced by the German writer, we must at least give him credit for his earnest treatment of the subject and for his thoroughness in the study of a question, the growing importance of which he could not anticipate. The Young German critic was impressed by the powerful directness with which public life asserted itself in America, and he was convinced that a glorious future was in store for this country; nevertheless for national and cultural reasons he believed in Europe's intellectual superiority.

Additional references to America are found in Gutzkow's shorter essays, collected and published under the title *Zur Geschichte unserer Zeit*. Even earlier than in "Die neue Welt," the writer reflects in the chapter "Zur Wissenschaft vom Staate" upon defects in the political and intellectual life of the New World. "What good to the Americans," he asks, "is their small quota of taxation? They have a republic, a government without splendor, an administration which has to bow to its citizens, a history without memories, a people without a nation, a country that, however, nobody can claim as his home-land."<sup>62</sup> In another chapter, entitled "Die rote Mütze und die Kapuze" (1838), in which reactionary and mystical ideas of the historian Görres are criticized, the author refers favorably to the relation of Church and State in America, and notes: "In America the Church is really separate from the State; any religious denomination or conviction there has the right to free worship. But it cannot be said that the Christian religion has thereby lost any of its beneficent powers. The education of the Yankee has decidedly been built upon Christian principles. Congress

<sup>62</sup> Gutzkow, *Ges. Werke*, X, 35.



begins and ends its sessions with prayer. In America quotations from the Bible alternate with those from Franklin's works and are considered more important than the latter."<sup>63</sup>

In a third chapter, many years later, entitled "Innere Mission" (1851), Gutzkow draws a parallel between the conceptions of "home missions" in Germany and in America. This later chapter comes from a much more mature Gutzkow, who was less theoretical and had enjoyed through many years the opportunities of a metropolitan journalist for observation and inference. In America, he thinks, works of charity, tending to cure social evils, are carried on with less religious tendency, emanating from a sense of national honor and from benevolent humanity, and, therefore, give to their supporters greater inner comfort than in Germany, where works of charity bear too much the official stamp of the Church. To exemplify this assertion, the writer points to the calm and humane way in which the apostles of peace, delegated from America in 1849, presented themselves at St. Paul's Church in Frankfort as real messengers of love.<sup>64</sup>

References to America are found, furthermore, in Gutzkow's voluminous cultural-historical novel *Die Ritter vom Geist* (1850-51). In Rodewald, alias Ackermann, one of the main characters of the story, we become acquainted with an educated German who spent several years in America. He bought a settlement on the Missouri and became a prosperous farmer. After the death of his wife, he returned to Germany with his young son. Inspired by poetic and romantic ideas, he could not at first reconcile himself to the new forms of American government and society. But he was filled with a deep awe of American nature in the primitive forests and beside the rushing streams. America showed him an abundant fulness of life, but just there

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>64</sup> Gutzkow, *Ges. Werke*, X, 302-303.

he saw egotism in full bloom.<sup>65</sup> He records his impressions of the country and its inhabitants as follows: "In America at least one is not troubled with the idea that the States are monarchic phenomena (Fürstenerscheinungen), the necessary conditions of existence of still more necessary dynasties."<sup>66</sup> "The American makes a show of what he possesses, he also likes to boast; but greed is rare. If this vice is found, it has been brought over from Europe."<sup>67</sup>

Not merely in his prose works did Gutzkow deal with America, he presented life in the New World also in dramatic form.<sup>68</sup> *Die beiden Auswanderer*, a drama published in 1844, which appeared in a later version under the title *Die neue Welt*, is a satire on the German emigration mania of the early forties. According to Gutzkow's own statement, this play, which was never staged and has well-nigh vanished from literary history, did not satisfy the poet himself. Considering the circumspection with which the writer expressed his views about America in his prose works, it is surprising that in this play he indulges in such a one-sided presentation of conditions in this country.

The scene of the first act of the drama *Die beiden Auswanderer* is laid in a village on the Neckar, that of the other four acts in New York. For the New York "milieu," not known to our poet from personal observation, the novels of Dickens and Cooper had to furnish the scanty coloring. After their arrival in the American city the German emigrants are shamefully swindled

<sup>65</sup> *Gutzkows Werke*, ed. by Gensel, XV, 394-395.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 108.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 251.

<sup>68</sup> Brefka, in his study *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*, (p. 9), mentions three either inaccessible or unimportant dramas of the thirties and forties: Sigismund Wiese, *Die Wilden u. die Ansiedler* (1835), treating a historical episode of the 17th century; Ph. Bruckner, *Die deutschen Auswanderer u. die Sklavin* (1844); J. Eysen, *Jacob Ballhorn* (1844), the scene of which is laid "in der Colonie in Amerika."

by a criminal notary public. In the hotel "Zum Menschenrecht" the servants are negroes. The hotel-keeper at first Americanized his German name König to King, and later, for democratic reasons, called himself People. In the picture of the "American marriage," as it is represented between the German-American King-People and his extremely stupid and pretentious wife, the privileged position of women in America is ridiculed. A zealous journalist, Butterfly, is supposed to give an idea of the power and influence of the American press. New York's society is represented as very wicked; its characters are either pietists, such as the aged Hopkins, or rascals, such as Robineau. Throughout the play the poet aims to show the social inferiority of America as compared with the older continent. The fundamental idea of the drama is revealed in the sentence, "A moderate lot in the Fatherland makes us happier than a fortune on foreign soil," or, as expressed in the final song of the play:

Germania, du nimmst uns an,  
Reichst uns die Bruderhand,  
Und bleibst dem deutschen Pilgersmann  
Sein bestes, bestes Vaterland.<sup>69</sup>

Five years later, in his popular tragedy *Liesli* (1849), Gutzkow treats the emigration problem much more thoroughly and presents America in a more favorable light. Bodmer, a carpenter in a Swabian village, who doubts that he will ever succeed in the Fatherland, makes up his mind to emigrate to America. On the other side, he thinks, he will find a better chance, for "there houses are being built, work is being done; lumber is cheap. In America people are enterprising: active hands, quick legs—I give you money, you give me work—I give you work, you give me money."<sup>70</sup> *Liesli*, however, although a

<sup>69</sup> Gutzkow, *Ausgewählte Werke*, I, 29.

<sup>70</sup> Gutzkow, *Dramatische Werke*, IV, 21.

devoted and faithful wife, is so much attached to her native land and so stubborn that she cannot bring herself to follow her husband across the sea. But Bodmer is unwilling to change his mind. Letters which arrived from the New World and an agent of the Texasverein who came to the village give a brilliant account of the prosperity of German immigrants in America and represent the conditions in the new country in the most favorable light. "For ten years hundreds of thousands of our German brethren have crossed the Ocean and have covered the German name with glory and honor."<sup>71</sup> Again and again Bodmer with all his persuasive power endeavors to break the obstinacy of his wife, but without success. Already the emigrants from the neighborhood are entering the village. Their song is heard from the distance:

Amerika, wo Freude quillt,  
Du Stern auf unsrer Bahn,  
Der Anker steigt, das Segel schwillt,  
Du nimmst uns freundlich an.<sup>72</sup>

In the biographical sketch of Gutzkow in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* Johannes Proelss says of the Young German writer: "Filled with enthusiasm for liberty and progress, he was an unyielding adorer of definite positive values in the life of the heart, the mind, the State, and of faith."<sup>73</sup> In the light of this characterization and from Gutzkow's own references to America in his works, his attitude toward this country becomes comprehensible. What appealed to him in American life was its progressive tendencies, and he appreciated in the American character its power of reasoning, its practical sense, and its keen interest in political life. But other features in the life and

<sup>71</sup> Gutzkow, *Dramatische Werke*, IV, 29.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>73</sup> *Allg. deutsche Biographie*, X, 235.



character of the Americans aroused the sharp resentment of the German essayist. He strongly condemned the brutal treatment of the blacks by the white population. Above all, he felt a painful lack in our nation of those ideal forces which gave European culture its superior value, its mysterious charm. Gutzkow was firmly persuaded that the cultural forces prevailing in the arts and sciences, in the conception of the State, and in the power of religion, were of little account in a country where manual labor, money interests, and commercial enterprises were regarded as of prime importance. From this viewpoint there could be no doubt to which side of the Atlantic the greater sympathy of our writer must turn.

Passing over to the works of other Young German writers, we find an incidental reference to America in a novel of Theodor Mundt, *Madonna, Unterhaltungen mit einer Heiligen* (1835). At the beginning of the story the author inveighs against the Waldromantik of the Romanticists and points to the curious fact that Schiller in the *Robbers* extolled primitive nature, whereas in his later dramas he pictured a state of civilization. In this connection Mundt remarks: "Is it not strange, doubly strange, that one tendency in man struggles for culture and another against it? Thus, the settler in Massachusetts rejoices when plying the axe and setting fire to the dark primeval forest in order to clear it for the building of a house and for the cultivation of fields. And yet, at the same moment when the lofty old trees are falling and burning, and the hundred-year-old dryads, sighing and crying, take flight, a foreboding grief breaks from the soul of the settler; his eyes fill with tears, and he does not know whether happiness or calamity will result from the cultivation of the wilderness."<sup>74</sup>

An important contribution to the picture of America by German writers toward the end of the period under discussion

<sup>74</sup> Mundt, *op. cit.*, D. 44.

was made by Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), who as a champion of women's rights was closely connected with the movement of Young Germany. Her novel *Diogenes* (1847) is a scathing satire on the sentimentalism of Gräfin Hahn-Hahn, and contains in its third part a parody on the romantic conception of the American Indians. The countess Diogenes, we hear, is in quest of a man who can fill her heart and make her completely happy. But neither a prince whom she meets, nor a lord, neither a priest nor a professor of anatomy can captivate her permanently. In order to find the right man, she makes a tour through all the countries of the world. When she finds that neither Europe, weakened by luxury, nor the Orient with its demoralization, can give her the man for whom she is longing, she thinks of the primitive world of the Indians in America. She declares: "There was in my character besides all the fashionableness of the woman of society a certain savage "je ne sais quoi" which had always made interesting to me the well-grown, noble savages, trained by love. I did not believe in their being extinguished; I hoped to discover yet a descendant of this noble race; I anticipated that I might find in him my fate."<sup>75</sup> While crossing the Atlantic in the company of the prince, Diogenes read all of Cooper's and Sealsfield's novels in order to become acquainted with the customs of the savages. In addition, she studied the language of the Delawares and learned by heart all the passages in which Parthenia, in Halm's *Sohn der Wildnis*,<sup>76</sup> converses with Ingomar, the chief of the Tektosages. After her arrival in the New World Diogenes sets out from New York on a journey into the interior of the country. More and more she finds out: "One has now to travel a long time in America

<sup>75</sup> F. Lewald, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>76</sup> Friedrich Halm (Eligius Franz Joseph, Freiherr von Münch-Bellinghausen) (1806-1871), Austrian poet and dramatist. His drama *Der Sohn der Wildnis* (1842) presents the victory of love and culture over barbarism.

before meeting savages; the world is 'terribly' civilized; nowhere any longer a touch of charming savagery."<sup>77</sup> When she reaches the last blockhouse of the settlers, she stops her carriage, and, dressed as an Indian woman, turns with the prince and a guide toward the Urwälder. "It was broad day when the open country, the rich meadow-lands between the rivers began to change into woodland. The grandeur of these primeval forests powerfully impressed my mind. Gigantic trees lovingly entwined their branches into a solid roof, blossoms climbed up on it and hung down from the highest branches like stars. A carpet of soft moss responded even to my lightest steps. A few birds rocked calmly and safely upon the branches, and a marvelous fragrance full of delightful freshness was diffused through the air."<sup>78</sup> Soon the three wanderers met a warrior of the Delaware tribe. "It was a figure like a youthful Antinous carved in red granite. Calm, black pupils shone from the white iris with a miraculous intensity, the nostrils heaved with aristocratic pride, like those of a young charger. I saw that I was face to face with no common warrior, a chieftain stood before me." At the request of the guide, the Indian consents to give Diogenes a resting-place for the night in his wigwam. "Through dense shrubs Cœur de Lion led me with a self-possession as though we were promenading in the Bois de Boulogne. Cautiously he bent back every branch, as if he wanted to see that I lacked nothing."<sup>79</sup> In the soul of this Delaware with its primitive simplicity Diogenes thinks she has at last found the image of her Diogenes, for whom she has been so long in search. When they arrive in the tent of the chieftain, he serves his guest a meal consisting of the back of a roe, water and arrack. In the course of their conversation Diogenes asks Cœur de Lion about his "wives."

<sup>77</sup> F. Lewald, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>79</sup> F. Lewald, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

When the Indian in surprise exclaims "What is love?", she tries to civilize him through enlightenment and instruction. She even suggests that he should take her as his wife. Then the Delaware informs the white woman of the duties which she as his wife would have to perform. She would have to fetch water for him, to dig his cornfield, and to boil his wild game; she would have to carry his children on her back and to sleep in his arms. By way of compensation the Indian would permit her to warm herself at his fire-place, to appease her hunger with the scraps of his meal, and to be his wife; but he warns her, "a Delaware does not respect a woman, for she is a weak creature, and he despises weakness." In addition, he would bestow a special favor upon her. He would spare her life when her hair should turn gray and when he must buy younger women. Shocked at this intolerable barbarity, Diogena shudders. On recalling this scene later, she exclaims: "Oh, where were my hopes! Where in this terrible reality did I find the ideals of Cooper?" Offended in her aristocratic pride, she pushes the arrogant, uncivilized son of the wilderness away, and even though threatened with violence, she refuses to become his wife. "I could not make up my mind to become the wife of this barbarian whose uncared-for hands were a horror to me, just as his drinking of whisky and smoking of tobacco."<sup>80</sup> After a few days, when Diogena is completely exhausted through forced marches and disgusting food, the Indian sends her back to the "elende Bleichgesichter," as she would not be worthy to become the wife of a young warrior.

From Fanny Lewald's novel it appears how mercilessly the writers of Young Germany attacked the sentimental conception of the Romantics, who had pictured in brilliant colors the primitive nature of America and praised the Indians as men unaffected by the evils of modern civilization. Young

<sup>80</sup> F. Lewald, *op. cit.*, p. 171.



Germany, we see, had entirely different views regarding the primitive state of those aborigines. Indeed, no contrast could be imagined greater than that between the refined culture of an educated European and the horrible filth and barbarity of a savage Indian. This contrast Fanny Lewald has drawn with a pen dipped in satire, contributing no little to a more realistic portrayal of the American Indian in German literature.

From another viewpoint conditions in the Western Hemisphere were criticized by Arnold Ruge (1802-1880), a liberal political writer connected with the movement of Young Germany. In the sixth volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften*, which contains his "Studien und Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1843-1845," the author analyzes the characteristics of American patriotism. The particular feature of this patriotism, he says, rests upon the government by the people, wherein a bold, unrestrained egotism comes to light. "The expulsion of the savages, the possession of the black men, and, besides, the purchase and sale of everything that exists, is a manifestation of its power and its sway."<sup>81</sup> In Ruge's opinion, the administration of this government of the "Demos" is carried on in all its primitive character (in seiner ganzen Naturwüchsigkeit). "The independence and the struggle of the individuals against one another, a competition through which they destroy each other, a war, which, it is said, once even led to a duel of engines, is from childhood the world of the American." This feature, we are told, reveals itself in the bustle of commerce and industry, in the conquest of wild nature, in the conflict with savage tribes and beasts. Thus, American patriotism, the author concludes, has a very inhuman foundation. "In viewing this patriotism, a European of culture can only pity the narrowness of a state of culture which derives its principles not from human society, but rather from isolated man and his love of money."

<sup>81</sup> Ruge, *op. cit.*, p. 336 ff.

Ruge furnishes another illustration of the acute interest which the liberal minds of Young Germany brought to the investigation of American national characteristics and the earnestness with which they applied themselves to the discussion of problems on which the Romanticists never touched.

In approaching the end of the period under discussion, we finally find that Gustav Freytag<sup>82</sup> in one of his earlier dramas, *Die Valentine* (1846), pointed to the New World as a refuge for political fugitives and adventurous spirits of Young Germany. When a student, Georg Winegg, the hero of the drama, was arrested by the government on account of demagogic intrigues. He was able, however, to free himself, was exiled, and, having acquired a small fortune from his parents, he fled to America under the assumed name of Saalfeld. When he later referred to his stay in this country, he gave full reign to his fancy. "There I swam across the Mississippi, plunged into the Urwald, sat in the councils of my friends, the Indians, rode on horseback through Texas and Mexico to South America, and there I roved about as a merchant, a soldier, and a hunter."<sup>83</sup> After fifteen years the exile returned by way of England and Italy to the Fatherland. There, even in later years, the memory of the land of liberty across the sea was always dear to him. "If at any time the falsehood of these days should buzz around my future, then I shall cheerfully plunge into the wave-like grass of the prairie and shall hasten to the hut of my red friends with whom I formerly hunted the wild bull."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Although Freytag belongs to a later period and was not a writer of Young Germany, his inclusion in this group as a contemporary in his earlier works may be justified.

<sup>83</sup> G. Freytag, *Dramatische Werke*, I, 162.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.—Fink, too, in Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (1855), is a German-American who considers the New World a country where he can satisfy his thirst for adventures and financial speculation.

These passages of Freytag's drama evidently echo wild tales of German travelers in America who after their return to the Fatherland boasted of their adventures in the primeval forests of the West. It is true that by the middle of the century America was already too well known abroad to permit belief in such extravagant fancies; but it is due to such grotesque accounts that even down to this day the conception is found in foreign countries that the New World is a land where the adventurous spirit of Europeans can easily be satisfied.

A review of Young Germany's attitude toward America leaves no doubt that the writers of this literary group were keenly interested in the most characteristic elements in the civilization of the United States, that they were strongly opposed to the traditional ideal conception of our country, and that, in general, they had no sympathy with cultural life in America. Only one author, Börne, manifested an unrestrained enthusiasm for the liberal principles of the Western Republic. A few others, like Duller and Gutzkow, gave credit to the practical nature, the common sense, the economic progress, and the political education of the Americans. But the majority of the writers, Gutzkow as well as Laube and Ruge, and particularly Heine, had only contempt and aversion for a country which, in their opinion, had no regard for the cultural and intellectual possessions of mankind, but still had room for the employment of slaves. They saw in the Americans only a nation of shopkeepers and business people, without any thirst for knowledge, without any sense of beauty, and without the contemplative mind, gifts which according to prevailing European conceptions gave to life its real charm and value. In this attitude of hostile criticism, the writers of Young Germany assumed a position at the opposite end of the scale from that of the Romanticists, but one which was only a little less exagger-

ated. It was only too natural that at that time the United States as a cultural factor could not stand comparison with the Old World. The country had first to conquer the continent and to provide for the physical needs of the nation before it could devote its attention to the cultivation of arts and sciences. These facts were not adequately grasped by those German writers. Boasting of the intellectual achievements of European civilization, and feeling themselves *beati possidentes*, they looked with disdain upon the Western Hemisphere in its initial stage of cultural life. The fact, however, remains that through their lively discussion and destructive criticism of our national characteristics the writers of Young Germany dealt a fatal blow to the romantic conception of America and thus prepared the way for a juster understanding and truer representation of the fundamental principles of the Republic.



## CONCLUSION

Having traversed the period under discussion, covering half a century of literary history, it remains, in summing up the results of our investigation, to recapitulate the presentation of America in German imaginative literature in the first half of the nineteenth century.

We began by pointing to the awakening of interest in America among the German people during and after the Revolutionary War. We have seen that this interest was reflected in a multitude of German publications regarding the young Western Republic from the pens of noted scholars and authors. In numerous poems the victory of the colonies was hailed as the dawn of a new era of political liberty, and in various historical and geographical works, in periodicals and books of travel, in journals and letters of Hessian officers, and in translations of French and English descriptive literature on America the German public was informed about conditions in the New World. This interest, however, decreased in German literature toward the end of the century, as shown by the attitude of the classical writers, who, with the exception of Goethe in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and of Schiller in *Kabale und Liebe*, hardly ever mentioned America in their works. We have seen, furthermore, how in the concluding years of the century conditions in America were unfavorably pictured in German literature for the first time by Dietrich H. von Bülow,<sup>1</sup> who from personal

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 28 ff.

observation found fault with the spirit of commercialism and with the lack of national education in the United States.

Then, turning to the new century, we found in the first two decades comparatively few references to America in German literature, a fact which we tried to explain by pointing to the critical times in Germany, when national honor demanded a concentration of all intellectual forces. While in those years, according to Henrik Steffens,<sup>2</sup> the conviction was almost general among the masses in Germany that European civilization was on the decline and must seek a new home amid the primeval nature of the New World, a conviction reflected in a work of popular fiction by Zschokke as early as 1804, the earlier Romantics, because of their absorption in problems of esthetics and later in political and historical questions, felt scarcely any real interest in America. Only Dorothea Veit, in her novel *Florentin*,<sup>3</sup> pointed to the Western continent as a land where European adventurers could find a field for their activities, and Jean Paul praised America as a fountain of youth for the weary minds of the Old World. Tieck,<sup>4</sup> on the other hand, voiced his strong antipathy to the industrial spirit of the Americans, and, in later years, Friedrich Schlegel<sup>5</sup> questioned the popular belief in America as the land of the rising sun of mankind's future civilization.

After the War of Liberation, when the hopes of liberal-minded Germans for a political reconstruction of the Fatherland were so grievously disappointed, a marked interest in America re-entered German literature. Henrik Steffens, in 1817, in spite of his admiration for the liberal institutions in this country, pictured America as the land of Unkultur. On the other hand,

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 47

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 54

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 51 f.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 52 f.

after 1815, the Romantic ideal conception of the New World found its way more and more into the works of German poets and novelists. With characteristic romantic longing these writers turned their eyes across the Atlantic and imagined there conditions which corresponded to their conception of a great and happy country. Of these later Romanticists several<sup>6</sup> seriously contemplated a journey to the New World, and not a few<sup>7</sup> actually found their way to America as travelers or emigrants. They pictured it<sup>8</sup> in highly imaginative style as a new and youthful world in contrast with the dying culture of Europe. Thus the romantic conception of America won its dominant position in German literature and, although strongly attacked from time to time, maintained this place until late in the nineteenth century. In the unreal light of this conception America appeared, first of all, as a land where nature had lost none of her primitive forces, with mighty streams and exotic forests, with virgin soil and exuberant vegetation. Furthermore, the Romantic writers viewed the Western Republic as a refuge from political and economic depression in Germany and from European weariness in general. They extolled America as the land of political and civic liberty and firmly believed that the New World was the promised land, a new Eden, destined to become the scene of mankind's future civilization.

In addition the Romanticists saw in the American Indian not a barbarian, but a gentle savage, untouched by Europe's corrupted culture. They pitied him as a victim of persecution by the white men who were mercilessly driving him from his native soil. This romantic conception of the American Indian found, however, early and severe critics both in the poet

<sup>6</sup> Platen, Grün, Freiligrath, Ludwig.

<sup>7</sup> Chamisso, Follen, Gall, Duden, Lenau.

<sup>8</sup> Lenau, to be sure, only in his earlier works.

Grillparzer<sup>9</sup> and the traveler Duden.<sup>10</sup> Especially the former with his antipathy to Romantic unrealities, ridiculed this idealization of the redskins as early as 1820 in a biting satire.

In the Swiss Heinrich Zschokke the romantic conception found its most ardent and enthusiastic representative. In contrast with him, Lenau, disappointed in the exaggerated hopes which had led him across the Atlantic, gave vent to his anger at American Unkultur in terms of most violent abuse.

The picture of America as it appears in the views of the Romanticists is, no doubt, ideal and one-sided. These writers, fascinated by the liberal spirit of our government in contrast with the reactionary policies of the Fatherland, had either very general and vague ideas about conditions in the New World, or, when they based their views on personal observation, their accounts are dictated by an enthusiastic sympathy for what they saw, untouched by any critical sense. It is not surprising therefore that the references to America in the works of Romantic literature abound in picturesque descriptions and poetic rhapsodies, but fail to convey to us definite ideas about the real character of the country.

As to the sources from which the Romanticists derived their ideas about America, it is interesting to note that, with the exception of the "gentle savage" and the love of liberty which they unanimously ascribe to the Americans, none of the characteristic features in their picture of our country are found in the numerous works of German literature on the New World from 1775 to 1800. The Romantic conception of America in the first half of the nineteenth century has its roots rather in ideas and works of French and English writers of the eighteenth century, who, as we have seen,<sup>11</sup> painted in sympathetic colors

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 176 f.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 117

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 33 ff.



the picturesque scenery, the virgin soil, the liberal spirit, and the independent life in America, who, furthermore, gave a highly imaginative account of the aborigines, and found in the primitive regions of the Western World the appropriate foundation for the upbuilding of a new and purer civilization. These fanciful views of the French and English writers of the eighteenth century then found, in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, an echo in the fantastic accounts of America contained in the works of Alexander von Humboldt, Chateaubriand, Irving, and Cooper. These writers, in turn, contributed largely to the formation of the Romantic conception of America in the minds of German writers in the period immediately following.

Much clearer and more realistic is the picture of the New World which we have found in the German literature of the romantic-realistic transition period.<sup>12</sup> It is true, the Romantic conception still prevails to a large extent in the works of the writers of that time. The description of primeval forests, of boundless prairies, mighty streams, and scattered settlements has lost nothing of its exotic splendor. And yet from this nebulous atmosphere more and more distinct traits of American life and character begin to appear. The writers of that period had learned from Scott the use of local color and historical descriptions and had found in the accounts of German travelers and immigrants in America a new source of information about real conditions in this country. Thus, in a great number of their poems and novels the character of America and the Americans of the past and present unfolded itself in its typical features and in realistic detail. Spindler describes New York and its neighboring country in colonial days; Biernatzki presents the social conditions of the slaves on southern plantations; Gerst-äcker leads us to the adventurers and settlers in Arkansas,

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 179 ff.

Ohio, and Louisiana and to the gold-diggers in California; Auerbach shows us the independence and prosperity of German immigrants on their farms in the Middle West; Grün, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, and Schults describe in detail American pioneer life on the Ohio and Mississippi, in Texas and Wisconsin. Willkomm portrays the character of the American in all its straightforward simplicity. The most comprehensive picture of life and conditions in the United States, as they existed in the first half of the nineteenth century, is drawn in the works of Sealsfield.<sup>13</sup> There, in a number of impressive sketches, this author paints the grandeur and majesty of the American landscape in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Texas, the picturesque variety of a scene in New York harbor, or the beauties of the Indian summer along the Hudson. We admire the marvelous pioneer work of American settlers in conquering the wilderness for civilization. We become acquainted with many and various types of Americans in the earlier decades of the century. We hear of glorious deeds and great statesmen in American history from the Revolutionary War to the struggle of the Texans for independence from Mexico. City and country life in their different aspects, the American form of government with its advantages and weaknesses, American culture and American industry, the difficult problem of slavery, economic and social conditions in the older States and among the settlers on the frontier,—all these topics are presented to us in the works of this German-American with a thoroughness and profound understanding of the typical features in our national life, that make Sealsfield the unsurpassed interpreter and historian of American culture in German literature of the first half of the nineteenth century.

The realism in the presentation of America by the writers of the transition period reveals itself not only in a more detailed

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 120 ff.

account of conditions in our country, but also in the readiness to criticize these conditions. Thus, Biernatzki and Grün do not hesitate to charge that the cruel treatment of the slaves by the white men is a stain on the culture life of America, that the conduct of life of the privileged classes in the South is largely controlled by materialistic interests, and that one-sided republicanism is a danger for the sound development of American democracy. Willkomm<sup>14</sup> points out that America in spite of her vast resources and technical achievements has no heart and no ideals, and that the spirit of liberty has withdrawn from the Atlantic States into the interior of the country. Alexis warns his countrymen against an exaggerated conception of American liberty and declares that the land of toil across the sea is no fitting place for cultured Europeans. Menzel considers selfishness an outstanding feature of the character of the Yankee. Kracken-fuss ridicules the gold-fever in California. Eichendorff, Zschokke, and Sealsfield reach, especially in their later years, more sober views concerning conditions in the New World and admit that America is no longer the ideal land as they conceived it in their enthusiasm of earlier years. Moreover, following Grillparzer and Duden, such writers as Biernatzki and Angmarset voice the opinion that the romantic figure of the American Indian is a product of sentimental imagination and does not correspond to reality. Particularly severe in his criticism of conditions in America is Schefer,<sup>15</sup> who vividly describes the manifold disappointments that await the emigrant as soon as he arrives in the land of his longing.

Thus, in the romantic realistic transition period, the picture of America grows rapidly less ideal and comes nearer to an objective presentation of the facts. We note clearly the influence of emigration, which contributed considerably to a better

<sup>14</sup> See above, pp. 211, 215

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 207 ff.

understanding of the actual conditions in the Western Republic.

A third stage appears in the presentation of America in the works of Young Germany.<sup>16</sup> Disregarding the ideal conception of the Romanticists and the more realistic coloring in poems and novels of the transition period, the Young Germans view America in the main as a land of *Unkultur* in which a cultured German can take no interest. While Börne, whose youth fell in the period of full Romanticism, is still loud in praise of America's grandiose scenery and love of liberty, the other writers of this group are almost unanimous in their antipathy to the materialistic spirit of the Americans. Although they are not unmindful of the growing economic and political importance of the Western Republic and endeavor in contrast with the sentimental attitude of the Romanticists, to analyze the typical character of American democracy, their European prejudices prevent them from doing justice to the peculiar conditions in the New World. With cynical scorn or arrogant contempt they point to the barrenness of American intellectual life, to the narrow conception of American liberty, to democratic rudeness, and to mob-rule and commercialism as characteristic features in the cultural life of America. Furthermore, they ridicule the conception of the "gentle savage" and present the character of the Indian as primitive, vicious, and barbarous. Thus, at the end of the forties, America appears in German literature in a rather unattractive light. The romantic conception had received a blow from which it has never fully recovered.

If we consider the presentation of America in German literature from 1800 to 1850 in the light of the historical development of the United States during that period, we find that the principal features of this development have been clearly reflected in the works of contemporary German writers. The opening picture shows the Western Hemisphere with its untold

<sup>16</sup> See above, Chap. VIII.



wealth, its majestic landscape, its economic prosperity, and its golden future. America appears as a liberty-loving country where there is no room for dynasties to oppress the people with arbitrary laws and burdensome taxation, no room for idle aristocracy and profligate nobility. The problem of slavery which in such a large measure absorbed the attention of the American people in the period under discussion, was frequently treated in the works of German writers. Two other features, no less conspicuous in American history in the first half of the nineteenth century, immigration and colonization, found first-hand consideration in numerous German poems and novels of that period. Furthermore, the absorption with materialistic interests, a trait so often criticized by German writers, as we have seen, was undeniably an outstanding trait in the national life of the American people. However, the poets and novelists of Germany in their sharp criticism overlooked the fact that the Americans, before turning to loftier ideals, had first to put their young republic on a sound economic basis and, moreover, that the people of the United States sought wealth not only for enjoyment and comfort, but also in the interest of their children, to give them advantages which they themselves had not enjoyed in their youth. Taken as a whole, the presentation of America in German literature of the first half of the nineteenth century is preponderantly sympathetic to this country and, undoubtedly, compares very favorably with the views on America expressed in contemporary French and English literature. It must, however, be admitted that a deep understanding of American psychology and a comprehensive interpretation of American national characteristics is found only in the novels of Sealsfield and Willkomm. This is the more surprising in view of the fact that in the thirties and forties the columns of such leading German journals as the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Ausland* contained almost daily detailed reports on political affairs and other topics of public

interest in the United States from the pens of correspondents in the capital cities of the Union. From these reports a more realistic conception of national life in America could easily have been gained.<sup>17</sup>

If, at the end of the period which we have discussed, we cast a glance forward at the presentation of America in German literature in the second half of the century, we note that in spite of the great number of ethnographic novels published in the fifties and sixties, hardly any new features were added to complete the picture of America as drawn by German writers between 1800 and 1850. Mügge, Möllhausen, Ruppius, and Strubberg,<sup>18</sup> in picturing the life of adventurers, German settlers, and American Indians, and in presenting various types of Americans in the Western States, were strongly influenced by the works of Sealsfield and Gerstäcker without attaining the impressive and realistic presentation of Western frontier life which they found in the novels of their models. Willkomm's *Europamüde* (1838), who with ideal hopes crossed the Atlantic, caused Kürnberger to picture in the *Amerikamüde* (1856) a German emigrant who, like Lénau, became more and more disillusioned in his high expectations from the first day of his arrival in the New World and finally, on the verge of insanity, returned to his mother country. Ethnographical novels of Th. Griesinger, Joh. Scherr, Karl Frenzel, and Fr. Spielhagen illustrated various scenes from the historical past of the Union, from the struggle of American settlers with the French and Indians, and from the situation of German immigrants shortly after the events of 1848.<sup>19</sup> Other novels, such as those of Friedrich J. Pajeken and Karl May, dealing particularly

<sup>17</sup> In those decades, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* published each year, in German translation, the text of the President's message to Congress.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. P. A. Barba, "Balduin Möllhausen, the German Cooper," in *Amer. Germ.*, XVII (1914), and C. Breffka, *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*, p. 23 f.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Breffka, p. 17 ff.

with the life of the redskins in the primeval forests and prairies of the West, can only be characterized as worthless products of writers who wanted to satisfy the sensational appetite of the German reading public. It was only in the latest years of the century, when the powerful economic rise of the New World began to attract the earnest attention of leaders of German commerce and industry, that America at last found a worthy and honorable place in German literature. Prominent men in the history of German letters, such as E. v. Wolzogen, Ludwig Fulda, Detlev v. Liliencron, Wilhelm v. Polenz, Rudolf Herzog, Karl Lamprecht, Gerhart Hauptmann, Eugen Kühnemann, and Fr. Schönnemann crossed the Atlantic and endeavored to gain personal impressions from their study of national life in the United States. Above all, Polenz's *Land der Zukunft*, picturing American cultural life with a subtle power of observation and with sympathetic understanding, clearly evidences the fact that a great German novelist was well capable of judging fairly and presenting intelligibly the national characteristics of a foreign country.

Following these hopeful signs which augur a new chapter on America in German literature, the World War seems to have rendered a mutual understanding of the two nations more difficult than ever. On the other hand, the political reconstruction of Germany based on more democratic principles as well as the new movement of teaching "Americana" in German universities,<sup>20</sup> and above all, the splendid record left behind by the American occupation forces after many months of personal contact with the population of the Rhineland, contain the promise of a deepened mutual understanding on the part of wide popular circles in both countries. That this will eventually lead to a closer interplay of cultural relations and reflect itself in a more accurate picture of America in the literature of Germany seems beyond doubt.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Fr. Schönnemann, *Amerikakunde, eine zeitgemässe Forderung* (1921).

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